

MACMILLAN'S MAGAZINE.

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THE PRINCE OF MOROCCO.

SOME forty minutes before reaching Venice the express from Trieste and Udine passes the village of Maroco,—as any doubting traveller may verify by consulting his old, well-thumbed copy of the official *Indicatore delle Ferrovie per l'Alta Italia*. But few trains stop at that insignificant platform. The station-master spends long, leisurely days between his beans, his tasselled maize, and the flaunting hollyhocks of his garden, undisturbed for hours at a time by any summons from a busier world. Now and then an old peasant woman rattles past with her milk-cans, or her load of fresh-cut grass, goading her donkey up the poplar-bordered road. There is scarce any other traffic. Indeed, there is nothing to distinguish Maroco, at first sight, from a hundred other such leafy hamlets scattered about that green and level country. If the place leave any impression at all upon the traveler's mind (already alert and a-tune for Venice) it can only be an impression of greenness and long continuance; a passing glimpse of humble, ancient houses; brown roofs, unimportant and enduring as the village fortunes which they shelter. And yet, for all this show of peace, here, too, there have been changes. Maroco hath had losses. The old fields lie out under the sky much in the old way; but the train puffing past clanks and jolts heavily across the very turn in the brook where the Prince's white oxen trooped to drink in the cool of the evening.

The strip of turf on which the station-house is built was long the Prince's favourite bowling-green; yet there is not a fragment of boundary-wall, not a vestige of carved stone left to show where stood the finest mansion of the place and time; for I hesitate to attribute undue importance to the local tradition which gives the name of Prince Ferdinand's Castle to a half-ruined farmhouse (a low grey building of rough stone) standing on a slight grassy eminence above the road. It is the same authority which claims that the fresco still dimly glorifying the stable front (a piece of work in very tolerable preservation when one considers its age, and clearly identified by many generations of village priests as the Dancing Daughter of Herodias) is in fact nothing else than the likeness of a young Jewess whom the Prince had met with shortly before his famous and infelicitous visit to Belmont.

I quote the legend for what it is worth. It is always interesting, in a way, as an example of the fashion in which some turn or mischance in a man's life will strike the public fancy, to stick there like a burr long after all that the man himself held for important in his experience lies buried with him, as forgotten as the place of his grave. And for the antiquary the tale has the additional merit of preserving the old title of Prince of Maroco, or Prince of Morocco, as the name was diversely spelled; a dignity which had its origin solely in the popular imagination.

For (as the latest historical research has now proved to us beyond all cavil), despite the lordly appellation by which he was universally addressed, and by which, with the reader's permission and for the sake of greater clearness, we will continue to designate him, Prince Ferdinand of Morocco was but the only surviving son of a bold and successful trader ;—a man himself of mean birth, whose very considerable wealth was amassed in a series of desperate mercantile adventures, chiefly along the sea-coast of Bohemia. Many of these exploits can only have escaped the name of piracy by reason of their extreme remoteness ; yet the results were golden. And these same results, looming larger still in the popular mind, had long since won for their latest owner his princely nickname. He had borne it for so many years now that it had grown to sit easily upon him, like an old doublet ; and yet it was by force of circumstance rather than by premeditation, more by good luck than goodwill, that Prince Ferdinand found himself at three and twenty years old sole master of all his father's violently-acquired wealth ; living in peace in the green old homestead, where that worthy buccaneer had planned to end his own stormy days, and where the safe domestic walls were still hung with strange warlike weapons of foreign use and make. Odd articles, too, of a ship's gear gave a salty smack of adventure to the sober farmhouse furnishings. The horse-block by the door was built of rare island wood, and had once made part of the cargo of a stout Venetian argosy homeward bound from Tripoli. There were rich faded silks, and stamped leather from Spain, to hang along the walls ; and tapestry enough stored in the dusty garrets to have decked the old house in bravery from eaves to foundation stone, if such had been the young heir's pleasure.

It was an authority he held by purest accident. The youngest of three brothers, with no mother known to him by name, he had been left at home to grow up among the farm dogs

and horses, with very little more care, or more prospect in life, than they. Had it not been for the example, the exhortation, the partial authority of Father Fabrizio, his confessor, it is doubtful indeed if the young Prince could even technically have avowed himself a Christian. It was the priest then who looked to all such matters, who punctually collected tithe, who examined with practised eye the accounts of the intendant, and, being in truth the only clerk among them, kept up such desultory communications with the adventurers of the Bohemian coast as the time and the men he had to deal with rendered possible. It was, finally, the good priest himself who brought to the lad the news of his inheritance. The first tidings of such a change were carried to the presbytery by a mendicant friar making his way across the country to his convent in Murano, by Venice city ; and a day or two later brought confirmation of his tale, and the visit of no less a personage than the late owner's chief mate and right hand man—one Messer Alessandrio of Chioggia, and as great a cut-throat and ruffian as ever set sail for a prize.

How this worthy ancient had settled in his own mind to finish his days in comfort and idleness beside his old commander's son ; how for weeks he flattered the lad, drank with him, gamed with him, affected to treat him as an equal in every form of wickedness, and, in a word, fooled him to the top of his bent, while the quiet priest looked on ; how the new comer parted, bit by bit, with every item of his precious information (being an eye-witness both to the old captain's death, and to that strange sudden seizure of the heart which had carried off the two elder brothers in one and the same hour), and how, having listened, observed, and waited, the urbane ecclesiastic had found his moment and bowed the bully and braggart to the door,—all these are matters which need not detain us now. While the dice were falling and the flushed young simpleton calling out for more wine, the priest and the pirate

had played their own little game for higher stakes than ever showed upon the table. And Father Fabrizio having won the rubber, helped himself to a modest pinch of snuff and reflected further.

The reflections of blameless men are apt to travel slowly. By the time Father Fabrizio had fairly settled his formula two years or more had slipped away, and his old pupil had left boyhood far behind him. He stood there now, a dark-skinned, taciturn, heavily-built young man, with no other good looks about him than such as arise naturally from unbroken health and a very unusual share of physical vigour. Oddly enough, he was rather averse than otherwise to making a display of this extraordinary strength of muscle. On any point which touched himself personally he was wild and shy as an unbroken colt; yet doubtless it was the consciousness of so much reserved force which lay at the root of certain fits of frantic, childish boasting which now and then broke out from him and clashed upon his general attitude of reserve. In temper he was at once passionate and reticent. There slumbered in his blood a sluggish and fiery strain, which under other guardianship might have promised mischief. And here showed plainly the result of the good priest's forethought. For arrived at man's estate, and master of the largest fortune in the country side, the young Prince answered to his master's call like a child, like one of his own dogs. There was indeed something curiously childish about him still; ignorant, sensitive, proud, vindictive, affectionate, he required as careful handling and humouring at moments as a peevish girl. He had no friends, and from pride or shyness made no efforts to associate with the youth of the place, though he clung with almost more than a child's faith to the man who had brought him up. He had never, even for half a day, imagined himself in love. Such, at three and twenty years of age, was Prince Ferdinand of Morocco. For the last six months the young

man had rarely clapped eyes upon his guardian without being greeted with some short pithy exposition or homily upon the advantages of a rich marriage; and on one dull afternoon in April, when for the nonce the past winter seemed set upon returning, when the young leaves shook drearily in the dry teasing wind and the dark sky was fretted with sudden gusts of hail and cold rain, the indefatigable priest seemed to have toiled up the hill from the village through the wild weather with no other purpose than to impress this lesson upon his late pupil's mind more fully. As he sat in the chimney-nook, his black skirts pulled up over his knees, his wet buckled shoes steaming before the fire, the good man's even voice made a little monotonous rivulet of sound in the great bare leather-hung *sala*, and dribbled on and on through the dusk with almost the continuosness of the rain. For with the fading of the daylight the night had set in wet.

"And consider, my son," Father Fabrizio repeated with soft persistency, "my good lad, do but consider that in doing as I bid you you are but carrying out the expressed wishes, not to say the commands, of my late patron, your excellent father, and may the holy St. Nicholas of Tolentino have his erring soul in mercy,—amen! There was not, I may say, a dearer project to his mind. The lady's father and your own were closest friends in youth. It is true that they took to different forms of commerce," the priest added with a short cough, "but let that flea stick i' the wall. They had been friends; and 'tis a noble estate; a virtuous and noble lady."

"I hate women," said the Prince.

"I am told," replied the ecclesiastic smoothly, "that the lady is very fair."

For all answer the young man snapped his fingers, and at the signal every dog in the room opened its eyes or lifted its head, and one noble old hound rose slowly from his place among the rushes on the floor, and thrust a

cool damp nose into his master's outstretched hand.

"Good old dog! Besides,—you taught me to hate 'em yourself," said the Prince.

The priest folded his fingers together softly inside his long hanging sleeves. "My son, we are taught many things, many things in our raw youth. There came a young signor here once from Venice who vowed she has locks like sunshine—like a golden fleece. I have heard that he was not the only one to find this so. Many Jasons come in search of her."

"I know her name is Portia; you told me that yourself. She lives at Belmont. I never knew any man called Jason. I had a bitch puppy once called Medea, but she died in the distemper," says the Prince, yawning heavily.

"Her name is Portia,—sunny-locked young Portia. You yourself were but a child, playing about this very room we sit in, the day your father heard the news of her birth. He swore then that since it had pleased the saints to send him three lusty sons, and to his old rival but this one frail daughter, it should go hard but one of his fine boys should have the handling of the money and the girl. I have heard him repeat the oath a hundred times after dinner, good man! And if any one of you had chanced to please him,—*What! backed the young horse that all my knaves are shy of? How now, beaten the groom? quotha. Tush! bully boy, thou shalt grow up, so thou shalt, and wed me Mistress Portia,* quotha. Twas his thought day and night; he was always at it. When men told him of the three caskets and the old man's device against fortune-hunters,—*Three caskets?* says he, *Ay, and my three sons to set against 'em.*—It would have gone hard," said the priest, "but he had had the fingering of the Belmont moneys, an' he had lived."

"And suppose that I and my two brothers,—rest their souls!—had each gone in turn and each chosen the wrong casket? What then? And all

for the sake of making sport for a yellow-haired madam. Am I not her equal in birth—in breeding—in fortune? Shall I be afraid of my own deserving? 'Twere damnation to think so basely, master priest, and so I tell you." He flung one hand up in the air, scowling darkly. "And then,—there is an oath to be sworn as well," he said in a different voice.

"Ay!" said the priest, "a solemn oath."

"Not that I should mind the oath. I am no marryer; not I!" said the Prince. "God save us from the women, say I."

Then in an instant the expression of his face altered to a look of keenest attention. "Who comes here? I hear horses on the lower road. Who comes so late?" he asked, turning around in his chair.

"Nay," said Don Fabrizio, "it is the rain spitting against the window. But, concerning that same oath——"

"I tell you I hear voices," says the Prince.

"——true, if you fail in this matter of the guessing you are bound never to speak to other lady in the way of marriage. But what then? If it jump with your humour not to wed, but to leave your fortune to swell the coffers of our Holy Mother Church, why then indeed, my son, I——"

"Look at the dogs!" cried the Prince. "Are there masques in the town, good father? I have not heard old Jezebel give tongue so clearly since last bear-baiting at Easter. Down, old girl! Quiet, good dogs, I tell you!"

With two strides he crossed the room and flung the door wide open upon the black and dripping night. A gust of wind and rain rushed in on the instant, scattering the ashes on the hearth-stone and whipping the smouldering red embers into a flame which went blazing and crackling up the huge square chimney. "Now whoever you be, come in out of the night in God's name," cried the Prince heartily. As he stepped back to let two dark heavily-cloaked figures

pass by him into the shelter of the firelit room some sudden fancy struck him. "And I pray you not to judge the quality of our welcome by the yelping of our country-bred curs," he added with a new and marked courtesy of demeanour, which the taller of the two strangers instantly acknowledged with the finest air in the world; explaining how he and his young companion had lost their guide and then their way, and bowing his acceptance of Prince Ferdinand's eager hospitality with an ease of manner and an apparent habit of the best society which sadly embarrassed his young host.

The Prince indeed seemed entirely to have lost his head over this sudden social emergency. He was in and out of the room a dozen times in as many minutes, calling for grooms to take the strangers' horses, for lights, for more fire, for supper, with all the cordiality that youth and curiosity and the shy, exaggerated friendliness born of a lonely life could suggest. The priest, too, had bidden the travellers a grave welcome; but while the elder and leader of the pair was elaborately apologising for the abruptness of their entrance, his reverence's watchful eye had remained fixed with a certain cold persistency upon the younger stranger. This was a slightly-built lad of perhaps seventeen, who kept his cloak about him and wore a fantastic velvet cap pulled low down on his eyes over his black curls. It must be owned that he bore the priest's scrutiny but indifferently well, twisting himself about on his stool where he sat before the fire; repulsing the dog's rough advances with a somewhat faltering touch of a very white hand; and every now and then throwing a glance of mingled defiance and appeal over his shoulder at the preoccupied face of his friend.

At last, and as Jezebel's attacks grew more pressing, "Ah, Lorenzo, good Lorenzo, call away the dogs! The great ugly beast would sure eat me!" the page cried out in a voice half

between crying and laughter; a voice which made the priest start again, and cross himself, and look more closely.

"Hullo! what pretty puppet have we here? The poor dogs won't hurt you, boy. Down, Jess!" said the Prince smiling. "What, puppies, must I take a whip again to the pack of you? It is not yourself, boy, but what you carry under your cloak that they would worry," the young man added carelessly.

"Ay! 'tis the monkey. I told you how it would be if you brought that monkey with you, sweetheart. What! cheer up, pretty Jessica! Never cry at a word.—She gave away the ring off her finger for the shivering little beast, only a week ago, at Genoa. By my faith! I would give just another such a turquoise to the man who would rid me of the ape," called out the elder traveller, and turned to his host with a frank good humoured laugh.

"She?" says the Prince with a stare.

"She,—he—little Jessica—my torch-bearer."

"The times are troubled. If you are making for Venice there are many broken men, disbanded soldiers, common thieves and what not, to be met with along the road. Your—sister does wisely to wear such a dress while you travel alone," observed the priest leaning back in his chair with a quiet smile. "I have a cousin, a worthy merchant, one Messer Salanio—"

He pressed his finger-tips together and kept his eyes on the fire.

"To Venice? Oh, we are not going back to Venice," cried out the pretty page in vast alarm, clasping his white hands and springing to his feet with a bound. The great muffling horseman's cloak fell in a heap to the floor; the monkey clung, chattering and scolding, to his mistress's gaudy doublet. "Lorenzo! if there be faith in man you are not taking me back to Venice? I am a Christian! I am no Jewess now! You will not send me back?" she cried breathless, and panted, and

sprang to the Prince's side, looking, imploring, into the young man's startled face.

"Now sit down, sit down, good Jessica. Now here's a coil! Faith! If I had meant to pass her off as my torch-bearer for long I should have had to teach my tongue to keep truer measure. I do not know how it is," said Lorenzo, turning to the priest, "but having spent my substance it would seem I am an unthrift still in words."

"It is a common failing," observed Father Fabrizio benignly.

"You will not let them send me back!" sobbed pretty Jessica.

"I let any one touch you?—not for twenty thousand brothers!" said the Prince.

"Sir!" cried Lorenzo, starting up and clapping his hand to his side.

Prince Ferdinand, too, had risen to his feet. "Don't cry, pretty lady," he said, and flushed red all over his face. "What! do you think I am afraid of that tall fellow's bare bodkin? Let him keep his steel to earn his dinner. I tell you a whole army of brothers with swords shall not carry you one inch towards Venice, while I am here and you say 'no' to the going. Look at that arm! Look at that fist! Touch it; feel it; don't be afraid. I am the strongest man in all the country. I think very likely I am the strongest man in all the world," the young giant said simply. "If he were not your own brother, just to show you, I could break the backs of half-a-dozen like him," he said, and laughed.

Jessica's long-fringed eyes were quite dry now. She looked from one man to the other and watched their faces and held her breath with a kind of soft guilty pleasure. "Sir," began the Venetian once more. His voice turned to dust in his throat. Twice he had to pause and moisten his dry lips with his tongue. "You gave us hospitality," cried Lorenzo. "Now Heaven grant me patience!—You have made us welcome.—Hell and fury!—Sir, if you loose not my—my—that lady shand—"

"What then?" asked the Prince, and laughed.

It wanted but another half minute and the two were at each other's throat like dogs. But while they yet hesitated, and drew deep choking breaths, and glared at one another with fixed eyes, of a sudden Jéssica had given a low liquid cry and run in between them. "But, good Lorenzo—Fie, fie, my lord! so strong and you would frighten a woman!—But, Lorenzo!—indeed, indeed," said the girl pouting her lips, "it was the monkey who began it all. I'll never ask you to buy me another pet, Lorenzo." And she stood there, smiling, panting, pressing them apart with her white childish fingers. "It was all the monkey, my poor little monkey and your bad angry dogs," she repeated, and drooped her long eyelashes over her dark glowing eyes. And the monkey clung there, gibbering and scolding upon her delicate shoulder; the changeful firelight shone and danced on every tag and glistening buckle of her pretty fantastic dress.

All this while the priest had never moved a finger or a muscle. He sat with his knees to the fire and stared at the points of his own shoes; but now he lifted up his quiet voice without turning. "My daughter," quoth Father Fabrizio, "that was very well spoken; Christian or Jewess, you have spoken the right word. For what is man who forgets himself but surly dog, or evil ape alive for mischief? Truly, my old eyes have looked upon many miserable failures of virtuous promise, but never before to-night did I witness warmer welcome turn more quickly to cold steel. Never before have I heard host insult guest across this old table, which is even now spread for the kindly meal they are to share in common. And never," said the priest, raising his voice, "never, until this day, did I, or did any man, touch the limit of hospitality between the four walls of this old house."

The Prince hung his head. "I was wrong," he said huskily.

He saw Jessica's eye watching him, and the blood leapt to his cheeks and darkened all his swarthy visage. "There, bear no malice, man. There's my hand on't," he said with evident effort; and would have taken the other's gloved fingers into his own great brown palm, but that Lorenzo drew back, muttering, "I am no friend to saucy priests. There has been over much already to-night of this giving of hands," the Venetian declared, scowling in his beard.

"I have a cousin," observed Father Fabrizio in a milder voice, "one worthy Messer Salanio, an excellent gentleman, and much about the Duke's person. He often favours his poor country kinsman with news of Venice, such as would escape us otherwise. And even lately—"

The two strangers exchanged a quick and somewhat anxious glance. "I know Salanio, that is, I have seen him often. A worthy gentleman, indeed," said Lorenzo hastily, "and no sworn enemy to good living. In my place he would have long since asked leave to break bread with our good host; ay, and to pledge you in a glass of your own wine, my lord," the nimble-witted Venetian added smoothly.

Yet as they all drew in their chairs to supper he was perhaps the first to be aware that never once did the Prince remove his fixed eyes from their study of pretty Jessica's mocking downcast face. On the other hand it was certain he made no smallest attempt to speak to her. Only his eyes followed her without cessation. Once, when a cold blast down the wide chimney made the girl shiver and draw in her shoulders beneath her thin boy's doublet, then the Prince was on his feet without a word. He left the table and walked over to an old press which stood between the windows, and stood there for a moment or two rummaging among the shelves while the other men sat in their places and watched him behind his back. Presently he faced around again, and in his hand was a red

silk scarf or handkerchief, a piece of rich Eastern stuff shot with gold and embroidered along the edge with fine seed-pearls. "It is cold," the young man said, and dropped the silk in passing on Jessica's knee and went back to his own seat at the head of the board.

But the girl cried out at the beauty of the fabric, and passed it lovingly through her fingers, and then glanced over at Lorenzo and flung the silken web down upon the table. "It was made for a princess to wear, for the Duke's lady, not for a poor girl only just a Christian," she protested, pouting. Then she gazed at it again and her fingers twitched. "It is cold!"

"My mother brought it away with her from the court of the Dey of Algiers. She was a Barbary slave from the country nearest to the sun, when my father saw her and stole her. And she stole *that*," the Prince said simply.

"A black slave, my lord! Oh!" says the Jew's daughter tossing her curly head.

And then, within five minutes, she had twisted the sumptuous trifle about her shoulders, and sat there fingering her wine-glass and looking down, conscious and smiling. The red silk lay close about her white throat; the flaming Eastern hues burned like flame under her pale, smooth, oriental cheek. Prince Ferdinand never moved his eyes away from her face.

"Do you like jewels—gold?" he asked abruptly.

And then Shylock's heiress lifted up her wonderful long eyes, and saw Lorenzo sitting opposite, very black and stern, and the mild-faced priest watching her. "Gold? Oh, I remember an evening once in Genoa with a friend—we spent four-score ducats one night at a sitting. He swore—one that was there—it was not the money that gave the occasion its richest price. But I have heard my father preach that young men steal maiden's souls with many vows of faith," she said softly, "with many vows of faith and ne'er a true one."

"So you *do* care for gold. I am glad," said the Prince; and the blood was in his face in an instant.

The dawn of another day was breaking, the clear, still, fresh April dawn, before Father Fabrizio had fairly succeeded in putting out of his mind the memory of the smile, the glance, the tone, with which those last words had been spoken. All night long, as he tossed and twisted upon his bed, the priest had been racked and mocked by a new fear which would never let him rest. "To have brought him up all these years, watched over him as over my own son, and to lose all for a girl—for a girl clad like a strolling player—a girl and a monkey!" he groaned over and over to himself a thousand times; and in the impotent violence of his disappointment he beat with both fists against the wall nearest his bed. To have watched, waited, plotted, succeeded,—and all for this! The thing was intolerable. Had he not foreseen everything? But no man could foresee this. It was witchcraft,—plain, damnable witchcraft. And in the dark corners of his room he seemed to hear something move; he could see the withered mysterious face of the ape, see the beast grinning at him in shadowy derision across its mistress's shoulder, and his blood ran cold about his heart. "*Retro, Sathanas!* get thee behind me, Satan! Beelzebub! fit and evil plaything for the old Jew's daughter! To have brought him up all these years and to lose him for such as this! The finest youth, the richest fortune, and oh, the dearest lad!" the old priest sighed heavily.

Forty years the childless man had been hardening his heart against this child of his adoption. For twenty years he had strengthened and tested day by day his power over the growing boy. Without one thought of pity he had sentenced the young man to a youth without companions, and established his own speculations upon the wants of that affectionate lonely heart. For twenty years, without a break, he had kept his quiet gaze fixed on the old bucca-

neer's ill-acquired fortune. To acquire it in turn, to govern it, to handle all those moneys had become a necessity in Father Fabrizio's life. It was his fixed idea, his persuasion. When the old man died he had thanked God. The two elder sons had been hurled out of life in an instant; and the priest had felt that heaven was working on his side. The project of marrying Ferdinand to the heiress of Belmont, with all its chances of defeat, and behind that defeat the protecting oath against other women,—this plan had come to the man of God like a direct inspiration from above. He had thought of it, dreamt of it, worked for it. And now, in a night, behold! the long laborious scheming of all his life lay there broken, futile, defeated, a thing for children to scoff at. "*So you do care for gold? I am glad!* Ah, fool, fool, fool!" the old man cried out in the darkness.

And withal his heart ached for the boy. Those two white hands that already had their childish fingers close shut upon all that money, would they shut less tight upon a foolish lad's trusting heart? "Fool! oh, fool, fool!" the old man sighed drearily, and turned and twisted upon his bed in the dark night.

So when the dawn broke, the clear April dawn, he had not yet closed his hot eyes in sleep; but lay there, heavily thinking, when a voice roused him, calling his name beneath the barred and shuttered window.

It was the Prince with his dogs; and across one shoulder he carried a young fruit-tree plucked up by the root, covered with thick pale blossom and as big in the stem as a man's wrist. But in his other hand he held a folded bit of paper. "Come down and speak to me, good father!" he cried, and his voice rang joyous and loud in the still morning.

But when the priest had gone silently down to him (stepping with a great shiver into the crisp, new air, out of that melancholy, stuffy little box of a room) it was as if all the young man's

assurance had dropped away from him ; and he laughed and stammered and grew red in the face and would not speak his errand, but tried to talk of other things, like a girl.

"Good Father Fabrizio, come up with me to the house. I will show you something when we get there," he entreated. And then he looked up at the young apple-tree he was carrying and shook it, so that many of the blossoms fell upon the dewy grass ; and he looked down at them and laughed aloud. "I plucked it up by its root with a single strain. It looked so white," he said, "and so sweet, growing out there beside the brook in the darkness. I could not sleep ! Have you slept, good father ? After midnight the rain was over, but it was a cloudy night. The brooks are swollen ; you could hear them running, far off, under the trees. Before the light came they were making a sound like singing."

"And you carry those flowers to that heathen woman ?" said the priest.

"Ah !" cried the young man drawing in a long, long breath of the buoyant morning air. And he threw up his hand, the hand with the letter in it, and his dull eyes shone out like living jewels from his dark impassive face.

"I thought you hated women !" the other continued, bitterly.

It was a weak thing to say, but he was a broken and a beaten man, and he knew it. And his head ached for lack of sleep, and all his person looked old and haggard and disappointed as he crawled up the hill towards the manor-house, and every now and then turned his head and stole a look at the young conqueror stalking on at his side.

"I thought I hated them too," the lad said simply, "and she came. And what else is there ? Why, all night long I have been playing the watchman for her sake. I walked in the wet dark fields, and the stars came out, and the moon, and all night long my heart has been living in her breast."

Then he looked down at his hand. "I cannot read it," he said, "but I know she has not been sleeping this night.

For when I wandered back to the house, before the first dawn, this paper was lying thrust under my door, on the threshold of my chamber. If she placed it there herself—" he looked up into the priest's white face, and his voice broke off into a glad, inarticulate murmur. "But I cannot read it. I am no clerk, not I. Why did you never teach me to read my letters, good Father Fabrizio ?" asked the Prince.

They were entering under the great gateway of the courtyard as he spoke, and already the first rays of the rising sun were turning to pink all the little floating fleecy clouds overhead.

"Give me the letter," said his pale companion.

He broke the seal deliberately (the other standing beside him and watching his face like a dog), and all of an instant the whole attitude and expression of the man was different. "This is not,—not from the heathen woman," he said briefly. His eye glistened and ran down the page, two burning spots of red glowed on either thin hollow cheek.

"Not from her ?"

"Lorenzo writes this to you."

"Lorenzo ? Oh ! her brother. The tedious city fool ! And I to think she was asking me for something !" called out the Prince peevishly, and flung himself down in a rage on the horse-block before the door.

"He writes this *To His Unknown Host*," said the priest ; and his voice quavered with some suppressed emotion.

To my Unknown Kind Host. As there might be too great a kindness kindled did we stay longer, I pray your merciful indulgence and thus churlishly depart, taking with me my young wife, for whose disguise, as for the calling of her "sister," I can plead naught but necessity, and the prudence which Fortune seemed to enjoin.

Then followed minute after minute of a dead silence.

"He signs himself *The Fate-constrained and grateful Lorenzo*," said the priest. But his voice shook now

with a new feeling, and he did not dare lift his eyes to where the young man sat motionless, and let his hands hang, and stared at the rising sun.

In the new golden light all the birds in the country side were singing. And now one of the stable helpers came out of a door hard by, and crossed the yard to see after his horses. One of the dogs ran after him, but the other only followed for a step or two, and then came back and laid his great paw on his master's knee, and pushed his nose into the young man's face. And then the priest felt something rise like a hard lump in his throat, and his heart turned sick and his lips twitched, and he could not bear the mere sight of the dumb anguish that was bringing him the very golden victory he had prayed for through all the scheming years. And step by step he crept nearer to the horse-block until the skirt of his long black gown brushed against the dogs, and he laid his hand timidly upon his pupil's shoulder.

"Ferdinand," he said. "Ferdinand, my son."

The Prince seemed scarcely to hear him at first. "What do you want?" he asked, and looked up with dull eyes.

"My kinsman Salanio, worthy Salanio, wrote to me of a young Jewess who has lately fled with her lover from Venice, bearing much of her father's treasure about her. And the robbed father vows vengeance; he holds a bond, Salanio tells me, upon one Signor Antonio, a merchant of Venice—"

"Ay, you know the story.—I've believed in you and trusted you, Father Fabrizio, since I was a little fellow that could hardly speak your name. But you knew the story all the while. *She* knew it. When she laid her hands—so—upon my arm, and looked up into my face—so—she knew it. You all knew it—all of you," said the Prince, and hung his head in bitter silence.

"Ferdinand,—" began the priest. And then, of a sudden, it seemed as

if ten devils had waked in the old buccaneering blood to set a heart afame. The Prince sprang to his feet. His dark face was blackened with passion until his features grew thick like a negro's, and the veins on his forehead rose, knotted themselves, and stood out like cords. Twice he opened his white lips as if to speak, and twice his voice broke and quavered thinly like a child's speech. Then, in another instant, his glance rested on the young fruit-tree he had brought in and leaned up against the wall of the house under *her* window; and at that a kind of dumb rage possessed him, and he fell upon the innocent flowery branches, twisting them and tearing them into splinters; he snapped the thick, elastic, juicy young trunk across his knee as if it had been a walking stick of dry wood, and hurled the stripped and dishonoured blossoms in handfuls to the ground. The dogs ran and smelt at them where they fell.

"I brought them for her," he said, in an awful choked voice. "For her, the damned jilt! The girl who robbed her own father.—Take me to Belmont, priest. Have out my horses. I ride a-wooing to-day. Oh! I have learned the lesson! I have learned what a woman could teach me! Has she money, that other one,—the one with the yellow hair? Money? Land? Jewels? Does the other one love gold, too? Ha, ha! I'll show her how to spend it. Four-score ducats at a sitting, in Genoa—at a sitting! Take me to Belmont, I tell you. Do you think she would not have me, *me* with my black skin and my broken heart, if only there be gold enough? Broken heart? God's blood! what heart have we here that is broken? Is it yours, Father Fabrizio! The priest's heart? Wait until we see Portia, my pretty, sunny-locked Portia! That will cheer you again, my bully Jack-priest! Ah, you shall hear me swear to her!—Jilts, jilts, all of them!—Yellow locks or black curly hair,—soft, little, dark curls that twist around a man's heart, like snakes!—Oh, I will make the

heavens fall but she believes me ! I'll go to her as a Prince ! I'll swear my mother was a Queen ! She shall hear royal blood raging in me!—Jilts !—Oh ! I'll rant the merchant's daughter down in rare fashion ; a playhouse Prince against her playhouse virtues. She shall hear me brag of the battles I have fought for her ; ay ! and how I crossed the Hyrcanian deserts, the vasty wilds of Arabia ; how I would out-stare the sternest eyes that look, out-brave the daringest heart on earth, and pluck young sucking cubs from the she-bear, or mock the lion roaring—all for one smile of love from pretty, pretty Portia ! ” He threw up his arms. “ Have out my horses ! I tell you, priest, I go a-wooing ! ” he cried boisterously.

And then, all of a moment, something seemed to melt and break within him. He threw himself down once more on the horse-block, his feet trampling the broken flowers. “ Oh ! I am grieved,” he said, in a soft voice like a weak woman's. The dog Jezebel thrust her shaggy head up against his cheek, and he let her lick the salt tears from his face unheeded. “ Oh ! I carry a grieved heart,” said the Prince.

How his Highness of Morocco went to Belmont, his wooing of fair Portia, the Test of the Golden Casket, and the disastrous ending of that suit, are all matters too well known to stand in need of further mention. By his own request, Father Fabrizio did not accompany his old pupil on that bootless errand. Whether at the last he repented of his past insistence, if he would fain have dissuaded the desperate young man from his perilous adventure, or if, with the cheap and compact wisdom of middle age, the priest comforted himself by the reflection that past passion is spent passion and gold a matter of certainty,—it would be impossible now to decide. After Prince Ferdinand's return the two men never alluded again to the circumstance which had so strongly urged on his departure. Presently, the priest, giving up the care of the

village church to younger hands, climbed the hill and found a place for himself in his old pupil's silent and gloomy house. In three years this had been the only acknowledged change in their way of living.

But those whose interest it was to observe him had long noticed a strange alteration, and that for the worse, in all the young master's habits. For one thing, he drank heavily. He had always been of a taciturn nature, but now for days at a time he never opened his lips. He seldom went out of the house, stalking about the place from empty room to empty room as if he were ever seeking for somebody. And if the priest rebuked him for the waste of substance which all these negligences permitted, the young man would make no reply at all, but stare with blank gloomy eyes into the face of his instructor ; or, it may be, break out into a wild laugh and a wilder jest about the devil looking after him while the Church looked after her own, which made the frightened servants cross themselves again while they listened.

But it was observed, too, by these same universal observers, that Father Fabrizio waxed more patient, more apologetically conciliating, more tender to these humours day by day. The old man's attitude towards his late pupil had grown almost pitiful in its humility. He indulged him now as if in a desperate effort to make up for all that was irrevocable ; and having discovered that news of Venice was almost the only thing which had the power of breaking through the young man's heavy reserve, the priest hardly allowed a month to pass without pressing for a visit from his old cousin and correspondent, the Venetian merchant Salanio. This latter worthy was a stout, well-fed gentleman, with a blue cheek where his beard was clipped close, and an inquiring twinkling eye. He dearly loved the pleasures of the table, and the promise of a merry night spent over Prince Ferdinand's old wine could bring him to the

country with much of the speed, if not the innocence, of a homing pigeon.

Late one April evening, when supper was over, the cloth drawn, and the window set wide open, so that odours from the lilac bushes in the garden mingled sweetly with the aroma of a huge flagon of excellent old Lambrusco freshly opened, as the three gentlemen sat about the old carved table, sipping and tasting, and then sipping again in preliminary coquetry with pleasure, there entered one of the Prince's servants with an announcement which seemed to sit heavy upon his mind, so that he shuffled sillily in his speech and hung his head, and could scarce be frightened by his master's impatience into mumbling that "there was one without, a Jew, an old man but very terrible, and has eyes that pierce like a sword, who swears he is no pagan Jew but a Christian,—and would fain beg a night's shelter,—and, if it might be so, bread."

"A Jew! a Christian! Come! this is matter for his reverence," says the Prince, filling up his wine-glass afresh. And he bade the servant show the old man in.

"My son, consider! In this house we have had enough of Jews;—consider! And my good cousin, your guest, would scarce sit at board with one of the race," cried Father Fabrizio.

"Nay, if the dinner were good, I know not. I have sat at meat with ancient Shylock before this. Ay, so I have. True, 'twas in the old days, before our noble Duke had judged and despoiled him. I never sat at dinner with a Jew before empty flagons—not that empty flagons rule at Morocco," says Salanio, with a good-natured wink at his host.

But the young man took no notice of the compliment beyond an impatient stare. "Let those who do not like my company leave it. No offence to you, Master Venetian," he said sullenly, and with an oath bade the servant not keep the Jew beggar waiting at the door.

"Now the holy saints, and more

especially the excellent St. Fabrice, my exalted patron, send that the pagan brute do not bring us another mouthing monkey," the good priest muttered in his beard, and almost at the same moment the door opened and Messer Salanio dropped his glass upon the table before him, and sat staring at the incomer with all his eyes, while his lower jaw hung loosely.

"Blessed St. Anthony of Padua!" the Venetian spluttered, "I thought the man dead and in his coffin these two years or more! Why,—Shylock! The man has not so much as one poor ducat left, that's clear. And his hair is gone white, and there's a hole in his hose, and another in his gaberdine. What, old Shylock, what news on the Rialto? Cam'st thou from Venice, man? Why, how now, Shylock? What news among the merchants?"

"Shylock—the Jew Shylock?" said the priest, and sank back in his chair.

"When I saw thee last thy coat had the fewer rents in it. It was at the Duke's court, if thou rememberest it, Shylock, and after judgment given for Antonio, my good Antonio, my honest Antonio! Oh, that I had a title good enough to keep his name company!"

"Shylock the Jew! Shylock the own father to that woman-thing Jessica!" moaned the priest.

"Who?" called out the Prince, leaping to his feet with an oath.

Then the old man advanced a step nearer to the table, and first he looked all about the room and the walls of the room like a trapped beast; and then he looked into each one of their faces. His eyes, set deep under white shaggy brows, burned in their red-rimmed sockets, burned with the fire of a blank, an eternal accusation. His clothes hung about his meagre frame in poor rags and fragments, and his countenance was ploughed, as it were, with passion, and rigid with an awful stony grief.

"I was that rich Jew, Shylock," he said, "and once I had a daughter."

"She is dead, Jessica is dead," cried out the Prince in a strange voice. And then he dropped down again in his seat. He filled his glass, the bottle clinked, the wine spilled between his clumsy trembling fingers.

"Thank you, good Signor Salanio," the old man went on. "I have known those of your race who had shorter memories for old favours and men disgraced. Believe me, I thank you in my heart for your gentle—Christian—courtesy."

"Faith, thou art a Christian thyself, old villain, or the Duke was the more deceived. Bid me not think the matter needs fresh looking into, at thy peril, Jew! Thou art as good a Christian as e'er a priest made by driving out seven Hebrew devils with a wash of holy water," quoth the burly merchant.

"I am," answered Shylock, "believe me, a most excellent Christian."

"Ay, thou hadst need. And how fares good Lorenzo? And your pretty slight baggage of a daughter? The little witch! Faith, I was of the party the night she gave you the slip. I had a friend knew the tailor who made the wings she flew withal."

"She was damned for it," said Shylock.

"Can't you let the talking be? The man is half starved. Give him supper, give him wine. There's nothing mends a heart like wine," says the Prince.

"Ay, supper, supper! Sit down, old gossip, and show us how a starved Jew-Christian can feed on the flesh of baptised hogs. No offence, your reverence," called out Master Salanio with another great laugh. "And Lorenzo, your son Lorenzo, lives then, worthy Shylock?"

"Ay."

"At Belmont still, I warrant you?"

"Ay."

"Ah, I heard as much. I heard as much," said the Venetian approvingly, and folded his fat dimpled hands over his little, fat paunch. "Ah—" he gave a long comfortable sigh. "Lorenzo

was heir to his wife, an' I remember the judgment rightly. A brave judgment, an excellent judge, a very Daniel gave the judgment,—eh, old wolf?"

The Jew looked up from his plate without answering. His upper lip was drawn back, his teeth were bare and gleaming like the teeth of a rat when the rick is tumbled.

"Lorenzo claiming part jurisdiction over your wealth; the noble Duke taking his full share; yourself an enforced Christian, and so cut off from the help of your tribal devils; your losses by Antonio; the costs of the suit;—ha, ha! Well, 'tis no wonder if you carry what's left you on your back. And Jessica," his voice took a kindlier tone, "pretty Jessica gone too! In child-birth, I warrant you. Poor little, mischievous, smiling Jessica."

"Let the man alone, will you? God's blood, sir! do I keep an ordinary that you may bait my guests under my eyes and at my very table? Let the old man be, I say!" roared the Prince.

The bottle had gone round so many times before this that Salanio only answered his host's remonstrance with a lazy good-humoured chuckle. "No offence,—Jews,—devils,—pretty girl," he added vaguely, and in the very act of half spilling and half filling another red bumper of wine, he stopped short, lurched heavily forward, and so, his head reposing peacefully among the emptied glasses, fell into a profound and noisy sleep.

Time had no meaning to the good man as he thus drunkenly slumbered. It might have been the very next instant, or long hours might have passed for aught he knew, when he was awakened by a rude and trembling hand, and by a voice which, even to his half unconscious ears, seemed to babble awfully of disaster and sudden death. As he stumbled to his feet, he was first aware of a change in the light, and the broad morning sky shining pale and still beyond the open window; and then his bewildered gaze

followed mechanically the direction of Father Fabrizio's shaking hand, and looked down—down on the floor, where one of the dogs was whimpering strangely, and pawing and snuffing at his master's stiff extended figure.

The Prince was quite still and lay upon his back as he had fallen. One hand clutched at the torn front of his velvet doublet, the other was thrown out wildly with loose, sprawling fingers, which the dog was licking. There was a smile as free from care, as happy as the smile of a child, upon the young man's gloomy face.

"His eyes are open,—he is drunk," the merchant whispered, and stared and shivered even as he said it.

"He is dead. I loved him, God help me! I thought it was the gold; and it was himself. And now he is dead," said the priest.

There was wine still standing on the disordered table, and with a crude instinct of giving something to a man in pain, Salanio poured out a draught and would have had his cousin empty the goblet; but Don Fabrizio only pushed his hand away.

"The night was long," he said, in the same toneless, dreary way, "and the Jew slept on his chair, but my boy sat there,—there where your arm is,—and every now and then he would turn his eyes towards the old man and draw a great sigh. At last, as the dawn was breaking, he roused himself,

and he woke the nodding Jew and inquired of him where Jessica lies buried? 'At Belmont,' said the Jew, and then my boy sighed again and pressed money in his hand and bade him go out of the house in God's name. Methought after that the load on his heart seemed lightened, for he stood by the open window for a long time looking up at the paling stars. And once he spoke, 'It seems,' he said, 'an emptier world, an emptier world with no little Jessica in it!' And even as I would have answered him, for his mood was gentle, he clapped hand to heart and fell, as you see him, as both his brothers fell before him. And I knew that my lad was dead."

"Now God rest him!" said fat Salanio. "But the Jew, good cousin? In God's name, can we not overtake and fine the felon Jew?"

He ran to the window and leaned far out. The sun was up, a wave of limpid morning air blew in his heated face. The birds were singing all together in the dewy lilac bushes of the garden. The poplar-bordered road wound away, white and empty, to the low horizon. All that sweet, green, level country, dotted with blossoming fruit-trees, lay like an open map under his eyes. And, far or near, there was no trace of Shylock.

GEORGE FLEMING.

LAURENCE OLIPHANT.

IF it was absolutely necessary and inevitable that a life of Laurence Oliphant should be written, everybody will admit that the task could not have been entrusted to wiser or more capable hands than Mrs. Oliphant's. Her practised literary skill and her right feeling were sure to enable her to produce an interesting narrative, while avoiding the obvious temptations which lay in her path to create dramatic effect. Moreover, the work required to be done with the delicate and sympathetic touch which only a woman could bring to it, for the most remarkable passages in the career of Laurence Oliphant, those upon which the attention of the world was certain to be concentrated, lend themselves only too easily to a sensational method of treatment. Mrs. Oliphant has in no way disappointed the expectations which were formed when it was announced that she had undertaken to relate the strange story of her gifted kinsman. We cannot, indeed, say that she has drawn a veil over the almost inexplicable actions of Laurence Oliphant in some most important epochs of his life; nor do we say that she has unduly magnified them. It was in the very nature of such a biography that it should disclose many painful incidents, and lay bare to view some weaknesses of character which cannot either be wholly defended or thoroughly cleared up. It is always difficult to form a right judgment on the conduct of another, since we must for ever remain in ignorance of the true motives that may have shaped that conduct, and the most that we can do is to guess at them from surrounding cir-

cumstances, or criticise them from our own standpoint. The difficulties in the case of Laurence Oliphant are exceptionally great. Most of those who knew him will feel very strongly that if he could have been consulted on the subject, he would have said, "For pity's sake let me sleep in peace when I am gone. Let there be no life written of me. 'Good friends, for Jesus' sake, forbear!'" But here is the book before the public, a thing not to be hidden away, containing within it nearly all the materials upon which the world will form its estimate of the man who once seemed likely to succeed in everything, and who ended by succeeding in nothing. It has provoked, and it will continue for some little time to provoke, more or less comment, and in this place also some few remarks must be made upon it.

The side of Oliphant's character which stands out most vividly in the pages of his biographer is that which led him into regions whither ordinary men cannot follow him, and where his own experiences, to our senses at least, were so disastrous. But it should be clearly understood that this was by no means the side which struck his friends; it was even possible to know him for many years without being aware of its existence. He was above all things a man of unbounded common sense—shrewd, practical, going straight to the mark in the most intricate business affairs, comprehending everything that was put before him almost at a glance, overflowing with new ideas and original suggestions. In the course of a somewhat wide and studious observation of men in many countries, I have seldom met with one whose advice was more valuable on a matter of business, or who could concentrate his faculties more readily on any enter-

¹ *Memoir of the Life of Laurence Oliphant, and of Alice Oliphant, his Wife.* By Mrs. M. O. W. Oliphant. Two Vols. London, 1891.

prise in which he was engaged. It became necessary at one time that he should occupy himself with the affairs of an Atlantic Cable Company, and he did it with so much tact, energy, and ability, that those who were responsible for the undertaking would have been quite willing to place the entire management under his control. The experienced city-men with whom he was associated had the highest appreciation of his services. Yet the fatal evidence of Mrs. Oliphant's narrative justifies the conclusion that he mismanaged his own life, and made shipwreck of the happiness of others. It is possible that the biographer had no wish to drive that terrible lesson, and that only, deep into the mind of the reader; but there it stands, written in letters of fire all across her work. Perhaps there was no other way of presenting the facts; and yet as they are set forth even by a kindly hand they create an impression of Oliphant which his friends must grieve over, though they cannot hope to shake it.

Brilliant, versatile, and accomplished we all knew Oliphant to be, and yet there was some deep defect in his composition which prevented him from reaching the distinction to which his natural abilities, had they been accompanied with steadfastness of purpose, would undoubtedly have carried him. Whatever he undertook to do he did well, but when he had done it he had a tendency to fly off from that particular field of effort, and to take up something new. He was the very man, one might have supposed, to succeed in the diplomatic service; but somehow or other he allowed all his chances to slip through his fingers. He had not the requisite concentration of mind or sustained industry to bring him to the front at the bar, to which he once thought of devoting himself, and even the pursuit of literature he followed in an uncertain, irregular, spasmodic fashion. He could not put himself into the traces and go on dragging the same load up the hill day after day. Before one

could say that Oliphant had settled down at last, he was off to the uttermost parts of the earth, and as a rule, no one knew in which direction he had gone. Months or years afterwards he would reappear in his old haunts, not changed in any respect, dealing with the subjects of the day as one might who had been doing nothing else but studying them, and greeting his friends as if he had only been away for a short walk in the park. If he wanted money, he would go to work for one of the papers or magazines, and get as much as he needed. But the desultory turn of his mind never forsook him. The moment he felt conscious of any degree of restraint, he vanished. He would work in his own way, and at what he happened to like, or not at all.

In the year 1867 I received a letter from Mr. Delane, the great editor of *The Times*, which journal I then had the honour of representing in the United States, asking me if I could ascertain the whereabouts of Laurence Oliphant, who had once more mysteriously disappeared from the view of all his friends. I had known Oliphant two years previously, and was acquainted with some of his peculiarities, and it at once occurred to me that if he desired to remain undiscovered he would not thank me for leading an exploring party in search of him. But being further urged, I think in the name of his mother, who had become exceedingly anxious about him, I made some cautious inquiries, and gradually felt my way nearer and nearer to him, first through a friend who had a delightful house on the Hudson River, where Oliphant had been taken care of during an attack of some illness. Then I heard that he had become a "Shaker." The Shakers are an honest and industrious folk, having their chief settlement at a village called New Lebanon, in the State of New York. I never heard a word said against them even by those who held in utter detestation all the rest of the Communistic Societies established in

the United States. The fruits of the industry of the Shakers, in the shape of chairs and other articles of their special design and manufacture, may be met with in pretty nearly all parts of the Union. Oliphant would have come to no harm if he had gone to these worthy people, but I soon ascertained that he was in another part of the State, and in reply to a letter he came to New York to see me.

I soon found that he had already fallen into the hands of Harris, whose influence over his subsequent life produced events more startling and incredible than Mrs. Oliphant would venture to reproduce in the pages of a novel. Who was Harris? A "Swedenborgian preacher" and an "uncultured American," says Mrs. Oliphant. But he was not a Swedenborgian and not an American, except by naturalisation. At the time to which I am now referring, Oliphant was very chary of speaking about Harris; but he told me that he was engaged in the "great work of his life," and his manner was very serious and subdued. In after years, when he became more communicative on the subject, he always led me to believe that he sought out Harris, and that Harris did not seek him. In whatever way the connection between the two men began, the power of Harris over Oliphant soon became absolute and supreme. Harris is now well advanced in years, but he retains the same sort of power over all who are brought into intimate association with him. He does not seek to make proselytes; it was partly in order to avoid notoriety and keep his "community" within narrow bounds that he emigrated from New York to California. That Laurence Oliphant, his mother, and his wife made over all their property to the Brocton community is undeniable; yet I have always understood that Harris did not profit by it, and this impression is supported by statements from Harris's followers which have appeared since the publication of Mrs. Oliphant's book. One of these followers asserts

that Harris's "entire worldly possessions consist of a house and the portion of ground on which it stands, both allotted to him by the community, and some shares in the wine company." There were no means of getting rid of much money within the community itself. The people grow or make what they require for their own use, and money is not often needed. If it be true, as some one has stated, that Oliphant detected one of the jewels or ornaments, which his wife had given up, on the neck of another woman, it would only have been in accordance with the laws of the society, which ordered that all things should be held in common. The jewels were, at any rate, not sold to produce money for Harris's personal advantage. And it seems perfectly clear that he could not have retained his marvellous hold upon all who gathered round him if he had been discovered in any fraudulent or dishonest act. It is true that Laurence Oliphant was obliged to make a threat of legal proceedings in order to recover possession of his property, but that property had not been dissipated; it was preserved almost intact. And, to the best of my belief, Oliphant never cast any doubt on the personal integrity of the man whom he once looked upon as the bearer of a special message from Heaven.

The truth is that Oliphant had a predisposition to succumb to the influence of a man like Thomas Harris. The old religious paths which have led myriads to a haven of safety were not sufficient for him. He saw that Christianity, as judged by the lives of many who professed it, was a failure. It was, in fact, no longer the religion taught by Christ. Those who undertook to expound it and to spread it abroad were no better than false prophets. "The devil's stronghold," as he wrote to a friend, "is now as it was when Christ came, not among the publicans and harlots, but among the sects." No man was more of the world when in it, no man seemed better fitted to enjoy it. He entered into all

its moods, and understood all its caprices. Wherever he went he was sure to be received with delight. He had a manner which never failed to charm, his conversation was delightfully fresh and varied, his originality and wit seemed to be inexhaustible. One would have supposed that weariness of spirit was to him a thing unknown. In reality, it was seldom absent from him for long together. A voice was always crying in his ears, "Live the life." Had he been content with the old teaching as it exists for us in its original form, he might have found what he wanted. He preferred the gospel according to Harris, and to what destination that led him is recorded with melancholy fidelity in the pages of his biographer. The people among whom he lived seemed to him to have no belief in Christianity, and therefore he arrived at the conclusion that mankind had outgrown Christianity, and that it was not adequate to the requirements of the present age. "Where," he asked in *Piccadilly*, "are the fruits of modern Christianity? If it be absolutely true, and all-sufficient for purposes of regeneration, how am I to account for the singular fact that there is as much wickedness in London in the year 1865 A.D., as there was in Jerusalem in the year 1 B.C?" From this frame of mind he passed to the confident expectation of a new Revelation. He remarked in one of his letters to his friend Mr. Liesching, "That God, after having spoken to the world for thousands of years directly through the lips of man and through no other channel, should now, at the moment of its greatest extremity, utterly abandon it, is not a reasonable supposition." He was constantly watching for the instrument through which the Divine message was to come, and at length he believed he had found it in Thomas Harris.

Did Harris himself ever put forward any pretensions of this kind? Oliphant never expressly said so, though he thoroughly believed that supernatural signs or visitations came

to Harris and to those who put faith in him. On this point he frequently spoke to me in 1867. The condition of the human race warranted the expectation of a further declaration of the divine will. I asked him if he thought that Harris must be regarded as a prophet sent from Heaven. He did not say yes or no, but he impressed upon me his favourite line of thought. The world was sinking deeper and deeper into sin and corruption. It was impossible to suppose that this could be allowed to go on. Messages adapted to man's necessities had been sent from Heaven in former ages; they would be repeated when the time for them came. We had to watch for that time and be prepared for the messenger. Why should not the good tidings come through Harris as well as another? There is a spiritual element in man which is capable of indefinite expansion and development, and the more it is cultivated the nearer will man be brought into contact with the ruler of the universe. And by this, he explained, he meant actual contact. He wrote to Mr. Liesching to the same effect, though whether at the period of his conversations with me I am unable to decide, for Mrs. Oliphant rarely gives any dates with the letters she quotes. "We enjoy evidences," remarked Oliphant in this undated letter, "both of an external and internal character which the world would call supernatural, encouraging us when we are obeying His will, checking us when we are going astray, and uniting us daily more nearly to Him and to each other." And again: "All we claim is a direct consciousness of divine guidance, without the comfort and consolation of which, mercifully vouchsafed to us, it would be impossible to support the trials and spiritual sufferings we are called upon to bear for His sake."

These trials were of no imaginary kind. Here was Oliphant, a highly cultivated and extremely sensitive man, throwing aside all the pursuits for which he was best adapted, renouncing his friends, and doing the work of

a common labourer or street hawker—for he told Mrs. Oliphant that he “cadged strawberries” along the railway at the command of Harris. The rule of Harris was one of iron. He parted mother from son, wife from husband. It may almost be said that the existence of Lady Oliphant was bound up in Laurence. Harris refused to allow them to meet, even when they were in the same village together. Oliphant was sent off to Europe or elsewhere on some mission, and he was not permitted to say farewell to his mother, or to write to her during his absence. When he married, Harris kept him apart from his wife, under a “system” which, according to Oliphant’s explanation to me, was so utterly incredible that I should hesitate to repeat his story, even if respect for the dead did not render silence a duty. The wife was sent away from Brocton to California, and after a time Oliphant went to the new settlement in the hope of being allowed at least to see her again. Permission was refused. It was what Oliphant himself describes in one of his letters as a “severe and scorching discipline,” and what his mother called “a fiery ordeal.” But there was warrant for this of a higher kind than any which came from Harris. The Oliphants wished to act upon the most literal interpretation of the sacred words, “Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.”

The account of Harris given by Oliphant to his wife shows the true light in which the “prophet” was regarded. “I have sometimes,” he wrote in one of his letters, “been conscious that the most successful things I have done have been owing to the strength I derived from an internal *rapport* with Mr. Harris who was fighting down influences opposing me at the time.” “We have each of us,” he continued, “to feel more knit into his organism than

into each other. His functions are pivotal, and we, in a sense, meet in him, for our breath is in some mysterious way enfolded in his. All he knows of you is through the conspiracy of your united breaths.” He inspired his wife with the same devotion to Harris, and with the same high purposes which were in his own heart. “What more intense happiness could the world give,” he wrote to her when she was still Miss le Strange, “than to see my darling overcoming all opposition, and, like some flaming angel, leading on the suffering womanhood of her world to new and unsuspected possibilities of victory?” “You will become,” he told her, “a divine decoy, luring with angelic art those round whom the evil ones have woven their toils, out of them, and getting them upon strong, safe ground.” When one reads the distressing sequel of all these burning hopes and mystical exaltations, a feeling of regret once more passes across the mind that a merciful oblivion could not have been thrown around the entire history. Nearly all who were vitally concerned in it have passed away. It may excite the curiosity of the outer world, but the world has properly no concern with it.

In the midst of this strange existence, Oliphant would now and then emerge, as before, into the common light of day, brimming over with new projects of all kinds, knowing everything about politics, society, literature, and the events which had taken place since he had last been seen upon the stage. He was always in demand at the *Times* office, and after some three years of seclusion at Brocton he consented to act as correspondent of that journal during the Franco-German War. But he suddenly returned to New York about the time of the Commune, and told me the story mentioned by Mrs. Oliphant, that he had been summoned back by Harris. A bullet had passed over, or close by, his head and he at once recognised Harris’s signal. He related the circumstance with a smile on his face,

but he evidently believed in the message. Again he represented *The Times* in Paris in 1871, and he also wrote a good deal for *Blackwood's Magazine*, where his contributions had for years been welcome. He was usually a long time in finding a subject for his pen, though when he had once decided upon it, writing an article or a sketch was a pleasure rather than a labour. But he had to choose his own subjects. He never could work out a suggestion from others. In 1872 he married one of the most charming women that this generation has seen, and in the following year they went to live at Brocton. But Oliphant from time to time reappeared in London, and as years went on it became obvious that his theories with regard to the spiritual life of man were increasing in strength. I have not the heart to trace the events which led to the final rupture with Harris, and to the new enterprise which led Oliphant to take up his abode in Syria. One evening, in 1886, after his wife's death, we met at the Athenaeum. He walked out with me, and we went along Pall Mall, and by Piccadilly and Regent Street to the Athenaeum again, and this round we repeated several times, Oliphant all the time telling me the most wonderful, bewildering, thrilling story of his daily and hourly relations with his wife since her removal from the world, and of his conversations with her, and of man's dual nature and the extraordinary complications to which it gave rise, that mortal ears ever listened to. I was obliged to turn from him occasionally, to look at the people passing by and listen to the roar of the traffic, to convince myself that I was walking the streets of London and was not wandering in a city of dreams.

Not the least remarkable part of the history is that since the publication of Mrs. Oliphant's book, two or three of the followers of Harris have not hesitated to assert that the tragic close of the unfortunate connection with the Brocton community was brought about by Laurence Oliphant's

revolt against the head of the sect. According to these statements,¹ Oliphant claimed the possession of "mediumistic powers," and believed that he had received a message directing Harris and all his disciples or friends to repair at once to Palestine, otherwise "he and all his people would perish." In a word, he stirred up a mutiny against Harris, and soon afterwards his mother died—"the first victim," as the spokesman of Harris in this country significantly puts the matter. It has been stated that Harris distinctly threatened Oliphant and his wife with death if they did not return to their allegiance to him, and although this is denied, Mr. Harris's representative does not hesitate to express his belief that if they had obeyed the prophet, both might "at this day have been alive and well." The same gentleman states that he "knew perfectly well" Oliphant's death "was inevitable if he continued to follow on in the same way in which his wife met hers." By acting in a spirit of opposition to Harris, they "allied themselves with the occult influences that were seeking to destroy his whole work in God for humanity, and in this way they were actually bringing to the test of a life struggle the fact of whether Mr. Harris's work was of God or not. And here, consequently, was fulfilled the word spoken by that apostle who was called 'a rock,' that 'judgment must begin at the house of God.'" And it must be added that Oliphant himself appears to have entertained much the same belief. A lady, in whom he had much confidence, expressed to him, during his last illness, her fears that he had been struck down by the malign influence of Harris. Oliphant laughed and replied that he had "no doubt Harris's devils had been busy with him." It is, of course, easy to say that all these people were mad, but those who knew Oliphant in-

¹ Made in letters from Mr. Arthur A. Cuthbert to the *Standard*, May 27th and June 4th, and in the *Birmingham Mail*.

timately have never been able to accept that explanation in his case. A man may doubtless be sane on all subjects but one ; but who can decide whether or not the mysterious experiences which Oliphant used to relate were entirely imaginary ? His biographer takes care to speak very cautiously on this dangerous topic. "It would be presumptuous," she says, "to pronounce judgment even upon these thaumaturgic movements. There are too many mysteries of the spirit unknown to permit us to come to light and arbitrary conclusions upon such a matter." To Oliphant, his contact with the life beyond that which we know here was the one great reality ; in comparison with it, the men and women around him were merely shadows. Severe judgments have been pronounced upon him since the publication of this book. For a time, at

least, it has become useless for his friends to protest that a finer and nobler nature, or a man more thoroughly sane concerning all points upon which it is possible to bring a man's opinions and convictions to a practical test, never existed. Harsh interpretations have been placed upon the manner in which he exercised his influence over his wife. It is said that he sacrificed everything and everybody for his own hallucinations. Few, indeed, are the men who have not suffered in some degree from having had their biographies written, no matter by how trained or skilful a pen. Far better for most of them would it have been if we could only have seen them "through a glass darkly." Laurence Oliphant was not destined to be an exception to the rule.

L. J. JENNINGS.

THE STORY OF A FALSE PROPHET.

EACH age has its illusions—illusions which succeeding ages with a recovered sense of sanity are often apt to record as the most incomprehensible of crazes. “That poor will-o'-the-wisp mistaken for a shining light! Oh, purblind race of miserable men!” is the quick, contemptuous comment of a later, clearer-sighted generation. But one may question if such comment be always just. May not the narrow vision, too unseeing to be deceived, betoken a yet more hopeless sort of blindness than the wide-eyed gaze which, fixed on stars, blunders into quagmires? “Where there is no vision,” it is written, “the people perish;” and though stars may prove mirage and quagmires clinging mud, yet a long rank of shabby, shadowy heroes, who, more or less unwittingly, have had the hard fate to lead a multitude to destruction, seems to suggest that such deluded multitudes are no dumb, driven cattle, but, capable of being led astray, have also the faculty of being led into the light. And if this, to our consolation, be the teaching of history ament those whom it impartially dubs impostors, then wasted loves and wasted beliefs lose something of their hopeless sadness, and in the transfiguration even failures and false prophets are seen to have a place and use.

No more typical instance could be found of the heights and depths of a people’s power of illusion—and that people one which in its modern development might be lightly held proof against all illusion—than the suggestive career of a Messiah of the seventeenth century supplies to us. Undying hope, it has been said, is the secret of vision. When hope is dead the vision perchance takes unto itself the awful condition of death,

corruption, for thus only could it have come to pass that that same people, which had given an Isaiah to the world, under the stress of inexorable and inevitable circumstance brought forth a Sabbathai Zevi.

“Of all mortal woes,” so declared the weeping Persian to Thersander at the banquet, “the greatest is this: with many thoughts and wise, to have no power.” Under the crushing burden of that mortal woe the Jewish race had rested restlessly for over sixteen weary centuries. Power had passed from the dispossessed people with the fall of their garrisoned Temple, and under dispersion and persecution their “many thoughts and wise” had grown dumb, or shrill, or cruelly inarticulate. The kingdom of priests and the kinsmen of the Macabees had dwindled to a community of pedants and pedlars. Into the schools of the prophets had crept the casuistries and subtleties of the Kabalists; and descendants of those who had been skilful in all manner of workmanship now haggled over wares which they lacked skill or energy to produce. East and west the doom of Herodotus was drearily apparent, and to an onlooker it must have seemed incredible that these poor pariahs, content to be contemned, were of the same race which had sung the Lord’s songs and had fought the Lord’s battles. In the seventeenth century the fires of the Inquisition were still smouldering, and Jewish victims of the Holy Office, naked and charred, or swathed and unrecognizable, were fleeing hither and thither from its flames, across the inhospitable continent of Europe. Nearer to the old scenes was no nearer to happiness; the furthest removed indeed from any present realization of ancient pros-

perity seemed those wanderers who had turned their tired, sad faces to the East. The land on which Moses had looked from Pisgah ; for which, remembering Zion, the exiles in Babylon had wept ; for which a later generation, as unaided as undaunted, had fought and died—this land, their heritage, had passed utterly from the possession of the Jews. “Thou waterest its ridges : Thou settlest the furrows thereof.” Seemingly out of that ownership too the land had passed, for His ridges had run red with blood, and in His furrows the Romans had sown salt. Jews had been grudged a foothold in Judæa from the very first century after Christ, and from the date of the Crusades any dwelling-place in their own land was definitely denied to the outcast race. A new meaning had been read into that ancient phrase, “the joy of the whole earth.” The Holy City had come, in cruel, narrow limitation, to mean to its conquerors the Holy Sepulchre, all other of its memories “but a dream and a forgetting.” And now, although the fervour of the Crusades had died away, and the stone stood at the mouth of the Sepulchre as und turbed and almost as unheeded of the outside world as when the two Marys kept their lonely vigil, yet enough still of all that terribly wasted wealth of enthusiasm survived to make the Holy Land difficult even of approach to its former rulers. Through all those centuries, for over sixteen hundred slow, sad, stormy years, this powerless people had borne their weary burden, “the greatest of all mortal woes.” Occasionally, for a moment as it were, the passions of repulsed patriotism and of pent-up humanity would break bounds, and seek expression in a form which scholars could scarce interpret or priests control. With their law grudged to them and their land denied, “their many thoughts and wise” under cruel restraint were dwindling into impotent dreams or flashing out in wild unlikeness of wisdom.

It was in the summer of the year 1666 that some such incomprehensible craze seemed to possess the ancient city of Smyrna. The sleepy stillness of the narrow streets was jarred by a thousand confused and unaccustomed sounds. The slow, smooth current of Eastern life seemed of a sudden stirred into a whirl of excited eddies. Men and women in swift-changing groups were sobbing, praying, laughing, in a breath, their quick gesticulations in curious contrast with their sober, shabby garments, and their patient, pathetic eyes. And the strangest thing of all, it was on a prophet in his own country, in the very city of his birth, that this extraordinary enthusiasm of welcome was being expended. The name of the prophet was Sabbathai, son of Mordecai. Mordecai Zevi, the father, had dwelt among these townsfolk of Smyrna, dealing in money and dying of gout, and Sabbathai Zevi, the son, had been brought up among them, and not so many years since had been banished by them. In that passionately absorbed crowd there must have been many a middle-aged man old enough to remember how the turbulent son of the commonplace old broker had been sent forth from the city, and the gates shut on him in anger and contempt ; and some there surely must have been who knew of his subsequent career. But if it were so, there were none sane enough to deduce a moral. It was in the character of Messiah and Deliverer that Sabbathai had come back to Smyrna, and long-dead hope, quickened into life at the very words, was strong enough to strangle a whole host of resistant memories, though, in truth, there was a great deal to forget. It was at the instance of the religious authorities of the place, whose susceptibilities had been shocked by the utterance of opinions advanced enough to provoke a tumult in the synagogue, that the young man had been expelled from the city. To young and ardent spirits in that crowd it is possible that this early experience of Sabbathai

bore a very colourable imitation of martyrdom, and the life in exile that followed it may have appealed to their imaginations as the most fitting of preparations for a prophet. But then unfortunately Sabbathai's life in exile had not been that of a hermit, nor altogether of a sort to fit into any exalted theories. Authentic news had certainly come of him as a traveller in the Morea and in Syria, and rumours had been rife concerning travelling companions. Three successive marriages, it was said, had taken place, followed in each instance by unedifying quarrels and divorce. Of the ladies little was known; but it came to be generally affirmed, on what if sifted perhaps amounted to insufficient evidence, that each wife was more marvellously handsome than her predecessor. And then, for a while, these lingering distorted sounds from the outside world had died out in the sordid stillness of their lives, to rise again suddenly, after long interval, in startling echoes. The wildest of rumours was all at once in the air, heralding this much-married, banished disputant of the synagogue, this turbulent, troublesome Sabbathai, as Messiah of the Jews. What he had done, what he would do, what he could do, was repeated from mouth to mouth with an ever-growing exactness of exaggeration which modern methods of transmitting news could hardly surpass. One soberly circumstantial tale was of a ship cruising off the north coast of Scotland (of all places in the world!), with sail and cordage of purest silk, her ensign the Twelve Tribes, and her crew, consistently enough, speaking Hebrew. A larger and certainly more geographically-minded contingent of converts was said to be marching across the deserts of Arabia to proclaim the millennium. This host was identified as the lost Ten Tribes, and Sabbathai, mounted on a celestial lion with a bridle of serpents, was (or was shortly to be, for the reports were sometimes a little conflicting) at the head of this imposing

multitude, and about to inaugurate a new and glorious Temple, which, all ready built and beautified, would straightway descend from heaven, and where the services were likely to become popular, since all fasts were forthwith to be changed into festivals.

The rumours, it must be confessed, were all of a terribly materialistic sort, and one wonders somewhat sadly over Sabbathai's proclamation, questioning if the promise of dominion over the nations, or the permission "to do every day what is usual for you to do only on new moons," roused most of the long-repressed human nature in those weary pariahs, the nation of the Jews, to whom it was roundly addressed. All the cities of Turkey, an old chronicler tells us, "were full of expectation." Business in many places was altogether suspended. The belief in a reign of miracle was extended to daily needs, and trust in such needs being somehow supplied was esteemed as an essential test of general faith in the new order of things. So none laboured, but all prayed, and purified themselves, and performed strange penances. The rich grew profuse and penitent, and poverty, always honourable among Jews, came in those strange days to be fashionable.

And now, so heralded, and in truth so advertised, for what a bill-posting agency would do for similar worthies in this generation a certain Nathan Benjamin of Jerusalem seems to have done in clumsier fashion for Sabbathai, their hero was among them. Nathan, it is to be feared, was less of a convert than a colleague of our prophet, but to tear-dimmed eyes which saw visions, to starved hearts which by reason of sorrow judged in hunger and in weakness, prophet and partner both loomed heroic. It is curious, when one thinks of it, that the same race which had been critical over a Moses should have been credulous over a Sabbathai Zevi. Is it a possible explanation that the art of making bricks without straw, however difficult of acquirement, being at any rate of the nature of healthy

out-door employment, was less depressing in its results on character than the cumulative effect of centuries of Ghetto-bounded toil? Something, too, may be allowed for the fact that the Promised Land lay then in prospect and now in retrospect. Altogether perhaps, in this instance, the idol does not give quite an accurate measure of the worshipper. A Deliverer was at their doors, a Deliverer from worse than Egyptian bondage; that was all that this poor deluded people could stop to think, and out they rushed in ludicrous, reverent welcome of a light that was not dawn. With a fine appreciation of effect, Sabbathai gently put aside the rich embroidered cloths that were spread beneath his feet; and this subtle indication of humility, and of a desire to tread the dusty paths with his brethren, gained him many a wavering adherent. For there were waverers. Even amidst all the enthusiasm, there was now and then an awkward question asked, for these shabby traders of Smyrna were all of them more or less learned in the Law and the Prophets, and though their tired hearts could accept this blustering, unideal presentation of the Prince of Peace, yet their minds and memories must have made occasional protest concerning dates and circumstances. And presently one Samuel Pennia, a man of some local reputation, took heart of grace, and preached and proclaimed with a hundred most obvious arguments that Sabbathai had no smallest claim to the titles he was arrogantly assuming. Law and logic too were on Pennia's side; and yet, strange and incomprehensible as it seems to sober retrospect, he failed to convince even himself. After discussions innumerable and of the stormiest sort, Pennia began to doubt and to hesitate, and finally, he and all his family became strenuous and, there is no reason to doubt, honest supporters of Sabbathai. Still the tumults which had been provoked, though they could not rouse the multitude to a doubt of their Deliverer, did awake in them a

desire that he should deign to demonstrate his power to unbelievers, and a cry, comic or pathetic as we take it, broke forth for a miracle—a simultaneous prayer for something, anything, supernatural. It was embarrassing; and Sabbathai, one old chronicler gravely remarks, was "horribly puzzled for a miracle." But in a moment the cynical humour of the man came to his help, and where the true prophet, in honest humility, might have hesitated, with "Lord, I cannot speak; I am a child," on his lips, our charlatan was ready and self-possessed and equal to the occasion. With solemn gait and rapt gaze, which, as a contemporary record expresses it, he had "starct on," Sabbathai stood for some seconds silent; then, suddenly throwing up his hands to heaven, "Behold!" he exclaimed in thrilling accents, "see you not yon pillar of fire?" And the expectant crowd turned, and in their eager, almost hysterical, excitement many believed they saw, and many, who did not see, doubted their sight and not the vision. Those who looked and looked in vain were silent, hardly daring to own that to their unworthy eyes the blessed assurance had been denied. So Sabbathai returned to his home in triumph. No further miracles were asked or needed, and doubters in his Messiahship were henceforth accounted by the synagogue as heretics and infidels and fit subjects for excommunication. In his character of prophet no religious ceremonial was henceforth considered complete without the presence of Sabbathai, and in his character of prince and leader unlimited wealth was at his command. Here, however, came in the one redeeming point. Sabbathai's ambition had no taint of avarice about it. He took of no man's gold and of no woman's jewels, though both were laid unstintingly at his feet. Then, suddenly, at this period of his greatest success, subtly appreciating, it may be, the wisdom of taking fortune at the flood, Sabbathai announced his intention of leaving Smyrna, and

the month of January, 1667, saw him embark in a small coasting-vessel bound for Constantinople, where a reception altogether unexpected and unprophesied was awaiting him. There had been great weeping and lamentation among the disciples he left, and there was proportionately great rejoicing among the larger community his presence was to favour; for, by virtue of the curious system of inter-communication which has always prevailed among the dispersed race, the news of Sabbathai's movements and intentions spread quickly and in ever-widening circles. It reached at length some ears which had not been reckoned upon, and penetrated to a brain which had preserved its balance. The Sultan of Turkey, Mahomet IV., heard of this expected visitor to his capital, and when, after nine-and-thirty days of stormy passage, the sea-sick prophet was entering the port, the first thing he saw was two State barges, fully manned, putting out to meet him. It may be hoped that he was too sea-sick to indulge in any audible predictions, or to put in sonorous words any bright dream born of that brief glimpse of a brother potentate hastening to greet his spiritual sovereign. Any such prophecy would have been all too rudely and too quickly falsified. It was as prisoner, not as prophet, that Sabbathai was to enter Constantinople, and a dungeon, not a palace, was his destination. The Sultan had indeed heard of the worse than midsummer madness that had seized on his Jewish subjects throughout the Turkish Empire, and he proceeded to stay the plague with a prompt high-handedness which a Grand Vizier out of *The Arabian Nights* could hardly have excelled. For two long months Sabbathai was kept a close prisoner in uncomfortable quarters in Constantinople, and was from thence transferred to a cell in the Castle of Abydos. Of the effects of this imperial reception on the prophet himself we shall judge in the sequel, but its effects on his followers were, strange to say, not at

all depressing. To these faithful deluded folks their hero behind prison bars gained only a halo of martyrdom. Was it not fitting that the Servant of Israel should be acquainted with grief? The dangerous sentiment of pity added itself to the passion of love and faith, and pilgrims from all parts—Poland, Venice, Amsterdam—hurried to the city as if it were a shrine. Sabbathai took up the *rôle*, and by gentle proclamation bestowed the blessings and the promises which had been hitherto showered down in set speeches. And so the madness grew, till a sordid element crept into it, and at first, curiously enough, increased it. In the crowd, thus attracted to the neighbourhood, the Turks saw an opportunity for making money. The price of lodging and provision for the pilgrims was constantly raised, and by degrees a sight of Sabbathai or a word from him came to be quite a source of income to his guards. The necessary element of secrecy about such transactions acted, both directly and indirectly, as fuel to the flames. The Jews in the spread of the faith and in their immunity from persecution saw divine interposition, while the Turks naturally favoured Sabbathai's pretensions, and continued to raise their prices to each new batch of believers. But complaints were bound in time to reach head-quarters. The over-crowding and excitement was a danger to the Turkish inhabitants of Constantinople, and among the Jews themselves Sabbathai's success begat at length a more disturbing element than doubt. A rival Messiah came forward in a certain Nehemiah Cohen, a learned rabbi from Poland. A sort of twin Messiahship seems first to have suggested itself to these worthies. Nehemiah, under the title of Ben Ephraim, was to fulfil the probationary part of the prophecies on the subject, and Sabbathai as Ben David to take the triumphant close and climax. So much was agreed upon, when Sabbathai, who was still a prisoner, became a little apprehensive of a possible change of parts by Nehemiah

who was at large. Disputes ensued, and ended in an appeal by Sabbathai to the community. A renewed vote of confidence in their native hero was recorded, and Nehemiah's claims to a partnership were altogether and summarily rejected. His own pretensions thus disallowed, Nehemiah at once turned round and hastened to denounce the insincerity of the whole affair to such of the Turkish officials as would listen to him. He was backed up by a very few of the wise men of his own community who had managed to keep their honest doubts in spite of the general madness; and presently by much effort a messenger was despatched to Adrianople, where Mahomet IV. was holding his Court, with full particulars of Sabbathai's latest doings. The Sultan listened to the story, and was literally and ludicrously true to the strictest traditional ideal of what one may call the sack and bowstring system, and there is no doubt that, in this instance, substantial justice was secured by it. Without excuse or ceremonial of any sort, without farewell from the friends he left or greetings from the curious throng which awaited him, Sabbathai was hurried into Adrianople, and within an hour of his arrival, deposited, limp and apprehensive, in the presence-chamber. The giant's robe seemed to be slipping visibly from his shaking shoulders as, sternly desired to give an account of himself, he, the glib cosmopolitan prophet, begged for an interpreter. Without comment on this sudden and surprising failure in the gift of tongues, the request was granted; and patiently, silently, Court and Sultan stroked their beards and listened as the marvellous tale was unfolded. Were they doubtful or convinced? Was he after all to triumph? It almost seemed so as the story ended, and the expectant hush was broken by the Sultan quietly requesting a miracle. Wild thoughts of a lucky stroke of legerdemain which should recover all, must have instantly occurred to this other-world adventurer. But no audaciously

summoned pillar of fire would here have served his turn; the astute Sultan meant to choose his own miracle.

"Thou shalt not be afraid . . . of the arrow that flieth by day. A thousand shall fall at thy side and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh unto thee." In the most literal and most liberal meaning the pseudo-prophet was requested to interpret these words of his national poet. He was to strip and to let the archers shoot at him, and thus make manifest in his own flesh his confidence in his own assumptions.

Not for one moment did Sabbathai hesitate. A man's behaviour at a supreme crisis in his life is not determined by the sudden need. It is not to a single, sudden trumpet-call that character responds, but to the tone set by daily uncounted matin and even-song. Sabbathai was as incapable of the heroic death as of the heroic life. It had been all a game to him; the people's passionate enthusiasm, that pitiful power of theirs for seeing visions, were just points in the game—points in his favour. And now the game was lost; he was cool enough to realise this at a glance, and to seize upon the one move which he might yet make to his own advantage. With a startling burst of calculated candour he owned to it all, that he was no prophet, no Saviour, no willing witness even; only a historical Jew, and very much at the Sultan's service.

Mahomet smiled. The tragedy of the situation was for the Jews; the comedy, and it must have been irresistible, was his. Then after due pause he gravely proceeded, that inso-much as Sabbathai's pretensions to Palestine were an infringement on Turkish vested rights in that province, the repentant prophet must give an earnest of his recovered loyalty as a Turkish subject by turning Turk and abjuring Judaism altogether. And cheerfully enough Sabbathai assented, audaciously adding that such a change had been long desired by him, and that he eagerly and respectfully wel-

comed this opportunity of making his first profession of faith as a Mahometan in the presence of Mahomet's namesake and temporal representative.

And thus the scene, at which one knows not whether to laugh or cry, was over ; and when the curtain rises again it is on the merest and most exasperating commonplace ; on Sabbathai, fat and turbaned, living and dying as a respectable Turk. For the actors behind the scenes, there was never any call, to hail a Saviour or to mourn a martyr. For them,

this puzzling bit of passion-play was just a mirage in the wilderness of their lives ; and for many and many a weary year, foolish and faithful folk debated whether it was mirage or reality. For his dupes survived him, this sorry impostor of the seventeenth century ; and their illusion, hoping all things, believing all things, withered into delusion and died hard. Such faculty perhaps, for all its drawbacks, gives staying-power to man or nation. It is where there is no vision that the people perish.

K. M.

MIRABEAU.

IT is now nearly a hundred years since the most remarkable man of a remarkable time closed his life's work in a failure more deplorable for his country than for himself. Mirabeau is not only an extraordinary man ; the history of his fame is almost more extraordinary than himself. It is not now possible to write anything new about him, for his fascinating personality has attracted more students than almost any other character of that interesting period, but a few words may be permitted in summary of what has been done before. The complete picture which shall include all the various sketches has yet to be made.

As a biographical study his figure is so peculiar that he has been taken as a type to work out the influence of heredity and circumstances on character. A whole history has been written of his ancestry by M. Loménie to divine the formation of so singular a man. Few things could be more interesting than to read the records of a race where Dumas's heroes are found walking, talking, and fighting duels in the flesh ; and the culmination of these caricatures hardly escapes being a caricature himself.

The history of his history, if the phrase is intelligible, would be a romance in itself, if a biography could be a man and awake a personal interest. Several times has his fame died, and been born again under new conditions. Not understood in his life-time, not understood at his death nor thirty years after, there are few great men over whom opinion is even now so much divided. Two considerable books have been published on his life, the *Souvenirs de Mirabeau*, and his correspondence with the Comte de Lamarek, each of which has revolutionized the public estimate of him.

He was born and educated to be a revolutionist. By his nature turbulent and unrestrainable, until the age of forty every authority that should have aided him was against him. But he broke through the restraints which should have bound his spirit and rose superior to them. This man, who was above law as he knew it, the law of the family, the law of society, the law of the State,—what law did he impose on himself ? It is here no question of deciding how far a moral sense is due to education, or whether Mirabeau can be absolved because he had neither the nature that submits to restraint, nor the example and precept which supply the deficiencies of nature ; it is a question of simple fact. With Mirabeau morality was at the best little more than a question of taste. It is perhaps not just to accept what has been said of him, that he was one of those men who mistake a sentimental admiration of the good for an acknowledgment of the principles of morality. The good that was in him was more than that ; great and noble qualities he really possessed. Dumont, who was one of those most capable of judging him, says that he knew no one who could be led so far by a sentiment of honour ; but adds that in him there was nothing uniform or restrained. Lamarek, while he describes him as one in whom all the energies and passions were striving for an outlet at once, in another passage bears emphatic testimony to the noble parts of his character which, he says, became more and more apparent as their intimacy advanced.

Yet magnificent as Mirabeau's understanding was, it placed no restraints on his appetites. A sort of standard of his own, dictated not by reason but by desire, forbade certain tricks and

devices which he considered disgraceful, and imposed a code of honour which placed bounds only on his means and not on his ends. We find him writing to Madame Monnier (Sophie) whom he was seducing, "These [his audacities] are the ruses of war ; but to betray hospitality, to ask a favour and deceive a benefactor, these are horrible perfidies, and this remorse would poison even my smallest pleasures." The greatest charge that can be brought against Mirabeau, the greatest stain on his character as a man, is that he prostituted his intellect to justify his passions, that he was not guided by reason but employed it as a cloak for his self-indulgence.

There can be no greater mistake than to attempt the discovery of Mirabeau's political opinions from remarks selected from his various writings and speeches. In the first place it is rendered impossible by his manner of work, of borrowing from various authors, procuring a large part of it ready-made from his friends, and even reading aloud in the Assembly speeches composed by others without looking them over beforehand. Dumont wrote as many as nine of his speeches, while Duroverai, Reybaz and Clavière were responsible for others. Once, according to his friend, Mirabeau trusted for his speech on the veto to a book by a certain Marquis de Caseaux, and he had so little mastered its contents that in the Assembly he was compelled to read aloud large parts, of which the crabbed and tortuous style, contrasting with his own occasional outbursts, betrayed his device to his audience. Further, it is only necessary to compare the picture of him given by Dumont at the opening of the Assembly with his final judgment a year and a half later, in order to see the change that was brought about in Mirabeau by experience. If we look at the Letters to Lamarck we can see still more clearly the process of his political education. He was to a certain extent an opportunist, and in 1789 especially he was far from having

fixed theories, when no man knew what the day might bring forth. Not without political principles, not without definite ideas, not without a wonderful insight, he knew that few things were impossible, and that on circumstances his own career depended. "Those men will drive me into the arms of the people in spite of myself," he said of the nobility before his election for the *Tiers Etat*. Before all things it was necessary for him to make himself a power ; and this necessity of forging an instrument, his popularity, has been mistaken by most men of his time, and by many since, for his real work. Victor Hugo, refusing to believe in his connection with the Court, wrote an elaborate panegyric on the great Tribune of the People. All doubts on this matter have been set at rest by the Lamarck Correspondence, and we now know that Mirabeau himself would not wish for the reputation which others claimed for him.

No man advanced quicker than he on the road of political wisdom. In his notes to the Court we can see the statesman grow before our eyes, and this more certainly because it is the only part of his work which was entirely his own. At first he does little more than sketch the condition of France, pointing out the dangers which must at all hazards be avoided. Then follows distinct advice on definite points, with careful consideration of temporary difficulties and the course to be pursued. Then there gradually grows up in his mind a conviction that some great change must take place in the royal policy, and this idea develops and takes form until from it emerges a plan unrivalled at once in its wisdom and its grasp of detail. Since we have the evidence of a friend, a remarkable observer, who was for a long time in the most intimate connection with him, and again the proof of the real work which he accomplished alone and unknown to this friend, the comparison of the two gives an insight into his character whose value cannot be over-estimated.

For instance, Dumont tells us what it would be difficult to believe were his word not supported by his character, and subsequently partially explained by himself, that Mirabeau was quite destitute of the qualities necessary to a chief of a party in the Assembly. He had too great a love of success to wish to share it with others, or to retain from motives of policy a word, or phrase, or piece of information that would produce an effect. Neither did he possess sufficient industry for the tedious business of collecting a party, regular attendance at the sessions, little conferences and petty conciliations to persons individually of small importance. This, and Dumont was an extremely acute observer, we could scarcely believe, if he did not continue that no man learnt so much or so quickly from experience as Mirabeau. His intelligence, which was able to see the future as no one saw it at the time, was not above remarking the qualities in which he was inferior to his contemporaries. At the age of forty-two he was able to train himself in new habits of work and thought. "I see," he said, when he attempted an impromptu reply in the style of Barnave, "that to speak well on a subject it is necessary to know something about it;" and this was from the orator who had had the greatest success of any man of his time. But his standard did not depend on popular applause. Reybaz, one of the chief of his collaborators, said of him in the last six months of his life, that he was an eagle compared to what he had been at the beginning.

Before the opening of the States General there was not a man in France who possessed less capital than Mirabeau of either wealth or reputation with which to work out a political career. Of notoriety he had plenty. From one end of France to the other the prosecution of his lawsuits and the scandal of his amours left hardly a name with a more doubtful reputation attached to it. He is at this time the typical political adventurer, and so he

appears in the writings of those who knew him before the Revolution, not only in his general position, but in the circumstances of his private life. Sir Samuel Romilly, in Paris at that time, who had known him before in England, gave him no encouragement to renew the acquaintance. Mirabeau, however, was not to be denied, and, though Romilly was in the house and refused to see him, in an hour he had enchanted Dumont, unknown to him before, and made him a firm friend. There was no resistance possible to such a man. To disdain he opposed unparalleled effrontery; men in the middle class of life he charmed by his air of a great noble and by the flattery of his attentions. If this were not equally powerful with men accustomed to real good breeding, he had more solid qualities to recommend him. It is curious to compare the effect produced by Mirabeau on two entirely different types of men, such as Dumont and Lamarck. The first, trained in systematic habits of thought, but quiet and retiring in life, although not valuing very highly his intellectual qualities, was overwhelmed by his subtle grace of manner and his power of pleasing. Lamarck, on the contrary, found in Mirabeau the exaggerations in style and manner, noticeable no less in his dress than in his conversation, which mark the man who aspires without attaining to the reputation of good breeding and perfect manners. But when topics were introduced where knowledge of men or a comprehension of politics was necessary, he was astonished at the brilliancy of his ideas and the force of his remarks. All things to all men as Mirabeau wished to be, he was as yet by only two or three recognised as a man of remarkable ability.

But 1789 was not a time when ordinary positions were made by ordinary means. And after all, in addition to his talents, there were many things in his favour. The very badness of his reputation, which excluded him from so many careers, at least drew on

him the eyes of all. He had, moreover, a considerable renown as a writer, which gave a circulation to his opinions impossible to other men. After the first suppression of the *Courier de Provence*, his original journal, and the substitution for it of the *Lettres à mes Commettants*, the new paper had three thousand subscribers in the first week. But it was without doubt by his eloquence that he chiefly raised himself to a great position. It is not of much importance to look for traces of it in the speeches which have come down to us even in his own organ. The speeches were nearly always written for him by others, while the effect of them on his audience was due mostly to the alterations and additions which he effected as he spoke. For these he picked up inspiration from every conceivable quarter, a remark dropped in the corridor beforehand, an interruption from the *Côté Droit*, or even from notes handed to him in the tribune which he read in the middle of his discourse. These, which were the really individual portions of his speeches, would be omitted or misrepresented in the fair copy printed next day. There are few of his striking sayings recorded, and these are scarcely superior to some passages which we find among his letters.

His power of carrying away his audience was marvellous, and his talents were rendered far more conspicuous through the procedure observed in the National Assembly. Every orator brought his speech ready-made on the question of the day, and read it aloud quite independently of what might have been previously said on the subject. This was fortunate for Mirabeau. If in debating power he was inferior to the Abbé Maury or Barnave, in the ordinary sittings his speech was better delivered and nearly always better reasoned, for his coadjutors were all singularly able men, and the Assembly would turn with pleasure to his speech after five or six wearisome readings. He seems to have been one of the few men who could read a speech

with all the fire of impromptu eloquence. There is a story of Mollé, the first actor of the Comédie Française, who once rushed up to him after a speech, and, congratulating him profusely, told him with tears in his eyes that he had missed his vocation in not having been an actor!

In six months or less his popularity was astounding. The fish-women, on the evening of October 5th, who had marched down from Paris in the day and poured into the galleries of the Assembly in Versailles, continually interrupted the speeches, crying out, "Leave that alone! We have had enough of that! Let us hear our little mother Mirabeau!" Often his popularity with the gallery was of service to him. When the Assembly, who in spite of, or because of, the power which he wielded over them, refused to hear him, he compelled attention through the support which he received from the spectators.

In the country he was almost the only Deputy with more than a local reputation. Dumont relates the answer of a postilion when he objected to him that his horses were poor creatures. "Yes; those two are not much; but," pointing to the one in front, who did the chief part of the work, "my Mirabeau is good." His fame kept on increasing up to his death, even after he had for some time lost the support of the extreme party. One of the most remarkable and emphatic tributes of the popular favour was, that the people still called him Comte de Mirabeau after the abolition of titles by law. The same indulgence was extended to him in other respects. Clavière said to some one who objected to Mirabeau's extravagance: "If it cost the state a million it would be well spent. It raises authority in the eyes of the people, and he is the only man from whom the Jacobins would stand it." The most splendid proof of his fame is the universal consent which at his death his character of political adventurer was wiped out. His bad reputation had stood in the way of his

connection with the Court and with men like Lafayette and Necker, but at the end of his life, and after his presidency of the Assembly, his quality of statesman was acknowledged by all. Dumont said of him, writing in 1799, "He is the only man to whom the honour has been paid of believing that if he had lived he might have arrested the Revolution."

Let us turn from the exterior and unreal life of Mirabeau, great as it was. It is curious that his fame should rest on a double basis, that for different reasons it should flourish equally in his life-time and one hundred years after his death. In his life-time he was the popular Tribune with a reputation built up for the greater part on the work of other men. His best work, if it had been known, would have at once destroyed his popularity. When society after his death had become gradually acquainted with the manner of his work and the small part of it that was original, a new source of information came to build up his renown more solidly and more grandly than before. This Mirabeau himself knew, and said as much to Lamarck before his death. The originals of his notes to the Court had been all returned to him and carefully preserved, and these he handed over to Lamarck with a commission to vindicate him with posterity.

This side of Mirabeau's life has even a certain beauty in it. Capable of living up to a high standard, he needed a man whom he esteemed to sustain him by intelligent appreciation and reprove him by his character. It was this quality in him to which Dumont referred, when he said that he knew no one who could be led so far by a sentiment of honour as Mirabeau. The whole tone of the correspondence is raised by the character of Lamarck. One of the old Seigneurs in the refinement of his feelings and the delicacy of his sentiment this man possessed real integrity, dignity, and force. Mirabeau valued his abilities highly,

especially in military matters, and in his letters took him more into his confidence than any of his friends. In return the combined frankness and delicacy with which Lamarck relates the unfortunate passages of Mirabeau's career are the best advocates for the character of both one and the other.

Already in June, 1789, Mirabeau made an attempt to open through Lamarck, whom he had met previously, a channel for communication with the Court. Meeting him in the Assembly he was asked by Lamarck to a dinner *tête-à-tête*, where they entered into a long and confidential conversation on Necker and the state of the country. "Where are you going with your incendiary views?" said Lamarck. Mirabeau in his answer showed his real inclination and the point from which a start must be made: "The fate of France is decided. The words liberty, consent to taxation, have resounded through the kingdom. We shall not get out of this situation without a Constitution more or less similar to that of England." He implied that he was driven to his present course by the necessity of making a position. "The time is come when men must be estimated by what they carry in that little space behind the forehead between the two brows." Then he added, "The day when the royal ministers will consent to reason with me, they will find me devoted to the royal cause and to the safety of the monarchy." A few days later, again dining with Lamarck in company where he could not talk freely of politics, he whispered as he went out, "Let it be known in the palace that I am more for them than against them."

In the first few days in the Assembly he had divined already the course events were bound to take. As eager for liberty as the greater part of the Assembly, he found that their want of method and reckless rejection of experience would lead them into courses incompatible with good government. He was full of bitter reproaches against the members,

and wrote in his journal an elaborate skit on one of the sittings. His friends noticed that these outbursts were more furious when he had made an unsuccessful speech, and put them down to wounded vanity. Dumont remarked later that his great wisdom and foresight were not understood because men did not see so far as he did ; and much of his anger at the folly of the Assembly was attributed to injured self-love.

He was helpless in the false position in which he found himself. On being reproached by Lamarck with the contradiction between his real opinions and his speeches in the Assembly, he answered,—“ But what position is it then possible for me to take ? The Government rejects me, and I can do nothing but place myself on the side of the Opposition, which is revolutionary, or run the risk of losing my popularity, which is my power.”

Such was his situation for three months after the taking of the Bastille until the King came to Paris. To different men he appeared under different aspects. Lamarck alone knew his real opinions and intentions, and made it his business to obtain confidence for him with the Court or in the Ministry. The Court looked upon Mirabeau as the demagogue waiting for his price. They were willing enough to stop his mouth, but as for seriously seeking his aid or advice, the Queen openly said she hoped they would never fall so low as that. The public, on the other hand, implicitly believed in him, partly on account of his eloquence and courage, partly because his past life seemed sufficient pledge that he would never make terms with privilege or authority.

There is another opinion which is the most interesting of all, that of his collaborators. Dumont believed that he saw him through and through,—“ There never was a man who had less power of retaining what he thought—he is the most indiscreet of men.” But he never was the thorough confidant of Mirabeau’s plans, and living

in complete intimacy, as it seemed to him, he was in a position at the time to see less clearly than any one else. Being himself part of the machinery which worked the great figure-head in the Assembly, he did not understand even the truth that was in the popular view. All Mirabeau’s actions were judged as those of a private man ; whereas he was on a plane above the ordinary level, whether regarded as the Tribune or as the future Minister. His abstention from voting on August 4th seemed a piece of cowardice ; in reality it was an act of sagacious policy. His tirades against the Assembly seemed the result of wounded vanity instead of the just indignation of the statesman. Clavière and Duroverai had even a lower opinion of him than Dumont. Continual and bitter quarrels broke out between them and Mirabeau, only patched up because both one and the other hoped to raise themselves ultimately to the Ministry by his popularity. Dumont, more amiable and more patient, but continually doubting the integrity and real ability of Mirabeau, was only retained by the personal charm of the great man, and subsequently broke away and went for a time into Switzerland. How completely he was mistaken will be seen later ; some of this Dumont saw and acknowledged at the time of Mirabeau’s death, but the whole truth he never knew.

In the Assembly his influence was now exerted to strengthen the Government, but always from his independent position. On the affair of the veto he was more monarchical than the Ministry themselves. Never lacking courage, he had come down to the Assembly with a speech prepared against the popular opinion, only to find that this vital point had been sacrificed by Necker to gain popularity. Certain to meet defeat, he refused to risk the danger of opposing a popular motion without the prospect of a solid advantage. Similarly he abstained from the session of August 4th, when the young nobles emulated one another in sacrificing not only their own property, but

that of others. "Some there were," says Dumont, "who, as they found themselves ruined by some proposition just passed unanimously, hastened in their turn to involve other people in the same misfortune."

The days of October 5th and 6th were the turning point of Mirabeau's career, not from any part that he took in the events of those days, but because after that time a definite idea arose in his mind of the measures necessary to restore an orderly government in France. He has been accused continually of having been one of the secret organisers of the popular movement which brought the King to Paris. If the new light thrown on his ideas did not show how entirely such a policy was opposed to his plans, there is definite evidence to prove that this supposition was extremely improbable. Lamarck bears witness to the presence of Mirabeau in his house the whole of the 5th, until the meeting of the Assembly, after which time Dumont, who was not unsuspicious, accounted for all his time until the Assembly went to Paris on the next day. And this is the time when, if he had had any connection with the movement, he should have watched its progress or at least seen the leaders of the mob.

The first step which Mirabeau considered preliminary to the re-establishment of authority was to get the King away from Paris, and, if possible, to induce the Assembly to accompany him. This idea he conveyed in a memoir to Monsieur, the future Louis XVIII., who was much struck by its statesmanlike ability. In it he pointed out the danger of allowing the tyranny of the Paris mob to control the Assembly and paralyse the central authority. "Winter is approaching, grain may be lacking, the bankruptcy may fall on us. What will Paris be in six months? Some decisive measure is necessary, but there is extreme danger in attempting any movement that is not well considered. . . . To retire to Metz or to any frontier would be to declare war on the nation

and abdicate the throne." So clearly did he foresee the fatal consequences which actually a year and a half later followed the flight to Varennes, and the King's subsequent connections with Brunswick. "To retire into the interior and rally the nobles around you would be no less a folly . . . There is little more to be hoped if you break all relations with this present Assembly." His distinct advice was to concentrate the guards half-way between Rouen and Paris, and for the King to go openly to Rouen while there was yet time. Rouen was a strong position controlling the food-supplies of Paris, and its position far away from Germany or Belgium would not awaken suspicion of flight. Once there, a proclamation should be made to the nation, setting forth the reasons of the step and inviting the Assembly to follow the King. Confidence was to be restored by the adoption of such liberal parts of the Constitution as were workable, and by the formation of a strong Ministry.

It is impossible to exaggerate the wisdom and foresight of this plan, which offered safeguards against all the evils which subsequently came to pass. If carried out with dignity and determination, it is very probable that the Revolution might thus have accomplished itself peacefully. At any rate the conservative elements would have been preserved to France, instead of becoming its enemies both within and without the kingdom. There is little doubt that, if even a civil war had followed, the combination of the reactionary interests of the Court with the constitutional party under Mirabeau, would ultimately have triumphed over all opposition. There can be no less doubt that after July 14th there was no danger of the re-establishment of the old *régime*. The alternative, in the most unfortunate circumstances, would have been better than the actual course of affairs.

It was at this point that Mirabeau left Dumont and his old collaborators behind him. Some attempt he made

to communicate to them his full ideas, but Dumont received them with so much horror that Mirabeau never completely confided in him. A few hints of his ideas leaked out, but so imperfectly that Dumont afterwards represented the plan as a projected journey to Metz or some other fortress, which was exactly contrary to Mirabeau's expressed opinion.

This design, it is needless to say, was never carried out. The King and Queen were far from seeing their position so clearly as to believe that decisive resolutions were necessary. Besides, as Monsieur pointed out, even the Queen was incapable of influencing the King sufficiently to induce him to carry out consistently a determined plan. And as yet the Queen saw many degradations preferable to following the advice of Mirabeau. Probably this was the last occasion on which a possibility presented itself of a peaceful solution of the great difficulty. Mirabeau, seeing the nation drift helplessly into danger without a hand or head to guide it, powerless himself to prevent it in any way, fell into the greatest despondency. Lamarck also, reflecting his opinions and despairing of the monarchy, withdrew to Belgium when he thought that he could be of no future use. What added the last touch to the gloom of the prospect was the law of November 7th, by which it was decreed that no member of the Assembly could be also a Minister. For some time Mirabeau had endeavoured to enter the Government by the influence of Lafayette, all-powerful since October 5th. This was combined with a powerful attack on the Ministry early in November. Lafayette refused to do more than offer a quiet bribe such as the embassy to England, while the extreme party had divined Mirabeau's secret intention and checkmated it by the Self-denying Ordinance. Mirabeau in his anger proposed an ironical amendment to the motion that no Deputy of the name of Mirabeau should be eligible to the Ministry.

The next few months are a blank, except for a few desponding letters which passed between the two friends. During this period Mirabeau aimed no higher than to get Monsieur into the Ministry, so that he might have one man through whose means he could exercise an influence on affairs. He had a high opinion of the prince's ability from the skill with which he had extricated himself from a charge of complicity in the conspiracy of a certain Marquis de Favras. Obtaining no more success in this direction in April, Mirabeau made another effort to conciliate Lafayette. It failed, and failed through Lafayette's own fault, as he afterwards confessed with regret in his *Memoirs*.

At last the Court made advances through the Austrian ambassador, the Comte de Mercy-Argenteau, and Lamarck to the great man. It was mainly the work of Mercy-Argenteau, who had much influence with the Queen. He had been introduced by Lamarck to Mirabeau in the preceding winter, and had been much impressed by his force and his ability. A bargain was struck between Mirabeau and the King, by which the debts of the former were paid with a monthly allowance of six thousand francs, and the promise of a million if his project succeeded.

This is the ugly spot in Mirabeau's public career, and one which cannot be glossed over because it is too apparent and too important. Ste. Beuve has summed it up in a few words: "He was not bribed, but allowed himself to be paid!" Yet at the same time there can be no more serious charge than a want of delicacy. His object was the public good, and if he had neglected this object he could have lived in comparatively easy circumstances. By the will of his father, who had died in the previous July, he had inherited an income of fifty thousand francs, but one so encumbered with lawsuits that it would have required a year's labour to obtain possession of it. This leisure he could not give, and his other means

were so entirely exhausted that he was reduced to borrow money from Lamarck to pay his valet. In these circumstances, when his services to the State were beyond price, it is only by an artificial standard that he can be condemned.

It would be tedious to recapitulate at length the various schemes of Mirabeau as circumstances altered, unless at the same time the course of events could be simultaneously described in detail. The communications with the Court were made sometimes through the ambassador, more often by note. To avoid all risk of discovery there was no meeting between Mirabeau and the royal family, except in August, when he was allowed to see the Queen at St. Cloud and kiss her hand. Mirabeau carried away an impression of Marie Antoinette which increased his devotion to her, but she, unfortunately, who could never rid herself of the belief that he was the author of the riots of October 5th and 6th, looked upon him with horror. It is perhaps the most deplorable circumstance in the history of the Revolution that these two persons could not have been brought completely in relation with one another. There can be little doubt that over the Queen, as over all, Mirabeau would have thrown that enchantment which he possessed the power of giving to any person who pleased him and whom he wished to please.

It is possible to gain an adequate conception of Mirabeau's consummate ability only by reading through some of his more important notes, such as those of June 1st, July 3rd, July 26th, October 16th, and December 28th of 1790. Quotations from them will give no idea of the wonderful detail which was combined with the fullest grasp of the whole tendency of French politics. There are some famous and oft-quoted passages of the most far-seeing political wisdom, such as that in which he points out that the work of the Assembly had not been altogether hostile to the monarchy: "The

idea of forming a single class of citizens would have pleased Richelieu . . . several years of absolute government would not have accomplished so much for the royal authority as a single year of liberty!" On the other side of the Channel Burke almost at the same time was pointing out, but with a different intention, the same fact. Mirabeau's opinion was that if progress were arrested at this point the reaction would not be violent: "I declare my belief that a counter-revolution is dangerous and criminal."

The plan in his note of December 28th is probably the greatest state-paper that was ever written. It was no question at that time of openly fighting the Assembly, for the Court was too much an object of suspicion; it was no less than a gigantic attempt to make use of the mistakes of the Constitution in favour of the royal power, and to direct the public discontent, which he foresaw, into channels that would be useful to him. He had a man in the Ministry on whom he could absolutely depend, Montmorin, who was to be the centre of the various organisations which he set on foot. Round this man, and depending on the control which he had over him, clustered all the great branches of an enormous design. In the first place there was to be an organised movement in the Assembly itself, by which a certain number of deputies were grouped round several of the well-known members, as Barnave, Cazalès, Duquesnoy, and Talleyrand, with whom Mirabeau had already come to an understanding. These groups, working independently, and controlled only by Montmorin, were to have no avowed connection with Mirabeau or with one another. So different is this idea from the English conception of party, that it may seem at first sight wholly unworkable; but it must be remembered that it was co-operation only in attack that was needed, for which purpose the several standpoints would be an advantage. Then Paris and the provinces were not left without control. A

magnificent system of secret police for Paris was actually set on foot by Talon and Sémonville, which served afterwards as a basis for the celebrated bodies of Garat and Fouché. This was the only part of the plan not frustrated by Mirabeau's death, and many of the reports were sent in, which have the greatest value. For the provinces there was an organised band of travellers to report on the condition of provincial feeling, and to convey to head-quarters all the movements of the popular pulse. A second system of travelling book-agents, distinct from the first, conveyed through the length and breadth of France an assorted series of political works entrusted again to a separate department of authors. These works and journals, to be prepared under the supervision of Clermont Tonnerre, were carefully adjusted to the particular tone of local feeling, and based on the reports of the first class of travellers.

This is the machinery which Mirabeau's death alone prevented from being put in motion. Lamartine calls it a huge plaything, where the number of cogwheels and excess of friction

would have made motion impossible. No man can pretend to say for certain whether it would have succeeded or not. It must have had an immense influence, and after all it was not so different from Roland's *bureau de correspondance publique*, and the organisations of the Jacobin clubs. Both these latter were inferior editions of the same idea which had an incalculable effect on opinion, while neither was in such able hands as those of Mirabeau.

The great man, or the great movement, which would have been victorious? The head whirls as it contemplates the question, and we are inclined first one way and then the other without being able to arrive at a certain conclusion. While he remained in a private and unofficial position the Queen would never have trusted Mirabeau, nor carried out entirely the best and most complete of his plans. At the same time it is impossible not to think that as time went on, if Mirabeau had found himself in Roland's place, he would not have lost Roland's great opportunities.

G. B. D.

CHALFONT ST. GILES.

THERE is in the south of Buckinghamshire a quiet rural district as yet untraversed by railways and still retaining much of the old-world charm and quaint simplicity of a bygone age. On the north-east the railway penetrates to Rickmansworth in Hertfordshire, on the south to Uxbridge in Middlesex, towards the west is the line which threads its way in a north-easterly direction through the pleasant vale of Aylesbury. Between them lies an oblong extent of country, as yet but little known to the Londoner—a land of green fields and shady woods, of gently-rolling hills and smiling valleys, where the violet and the primrose still bloom unharmed by the hand of the spoiler, and the dog-rose and the honeysuckle scent the air as one wanders through the quiet, unfrequented lanes. There is no neighbourhood in England which, lying close to the smoke and turmoil of a great city, is nevertheless so little disturbed by the strenuous struggle for existence that rages in all its complex activity not many miles away.

It was in this secluded district that Milton found a refuge among the Quakers in 1665, the year of the Great Plague of London; and to-day we are making a pilgrimage to the scene of his sojourn. We pass down the main street of Uxbridge, the last county-town now remaining to Middlesex; and, crossing into Buckinghamshire by a bridge which spans the sluggish Colne, we find ourselves in the open country. As we look upon the quiet fields and breathe the pure, fresh, morning air, we remember how the great poet, to whose sequestered retreat we are hastening, has told us that

Wisdom's self
Oft seeks to sweet retired solitude,
Where, with her best nurse Contemplation,

She plumes her feathers and lets grow her wings,
That in the various bustle of resort
Were all-to ruffled and sometimes impaired.

We follow the high road which leads to Beaconsfield and Oxford, and, after ascending a gradual incline, we gain a prospect of the pleasant Buckinghamshire country through which we are about to pass, and trace the course of the Misbourne stream, as it wanders through a picturesque valley amid grassy slopes and richly-wooded hills.

It is a delicious day in early winter. The pale blue sky is dappled with soft grey clouds; the slanting rays of the winter sun break gently from the east, and fall with mellow influence over the misty landscape, touching the vapours that rest in the valleys with light, and wrapping the russet woods on the hill-tops in a mantle of amber and gold. The pastures have not yet lost their autumn verdure, and the moist green blades are glittering in the morning sun; the haws and holly-beries are burning brightly in the thickets, and the birds break out once more into the rapturous carol of spring.

We turn to the right into the Misbourne valley, and before it is noon reach the little village of Chalfont St. Peter. The houses cluster round a ford in the Misbourne, and the two roomy old inns, with their high archways and spacious stables, stand looking at each other across the stream, recalling pictures of the coaching days of the past. The woods close by are those of the Grange, once the residence of the notorious Judge Jeffreys, but, at the time which interests us now, the abode of a very different man. Here lived Isaac Penington, the Quaker apostle, a relative of the Fleetwoods, and a man of note in the days of Milton,

who was indirectly the cause of the poet's coming to Chalfont St. Giles. He was the founder of the Quaker colony in Buckinghamshire, which numbered among its members his son-in-law, the famous William Penn, and his disciple Thomas Elwood, the young friend of Milton. Penington himself had been converted by George Fox, and like his master suffered unnumbered persecutions at the hands of Churchmen and Puritans alike. He was a man of extraordinary literary activity ; but he seems to have gained time for writing during his frequent imprisonments. The titles of his treatises, such as *Babylon the Great described*, *the City of Confusion in which Antichrist reigns*, or, *The Jew Outward, being a Glass for the Professors of the Age*, or, *The Axe laid to the Root of the Old Corrupt Tree*, show the outspoken fervour of their contents. When Milton came hither among the Friends, Penington had not long been released from Aylesbury gaol : Elwood was soon to go thither ; and Penn, a young man and as yet untried by persecution, had just returned to England from his travels.

Elwood gives in his autobiography an interesting account of his first introduction to the poet. As a boy he had made some progress in learning, but he had forgotten what he had learned ; " Nor was I rightly sensible of my loss therein," he says, " till I came among the Quakers." He toiled hard to regain his former knowledge ; but, making little progress, he obtained through Isaac Penington an introduction to John Milton, " a Gentleman of great note for Learning throughout the learned world for the accurate Pieces he had written on various subjects and occasions." " This Person," he goes on, " having filled a public Station in the former times, lived now a private and retired life in London, and, having wholly lost his sight, kept always a man to read to him. . . . I took a lodging near his house, and thenceforward went every day in the afternoon, and sitting by him in his

dining-room read to him in such Books in the Latin Tongue as he pleased to hear me read. He, perceiving with what earnest desire I pursued Learning, gave me not only all the Encouragement but all the Help he could ; for, having a curious Ear, he understood by my Tone when I understood what I read and when I did not ; and accordingly would stop me, examine me, and open the most difficult passages to me."

Such was the beginning of the friendship which four years later brought Milton to Chalfont St. Giles. Elwood's enthusiasm and devotion to literature must have attracted the now aged poet from the first ; and the youthful Quaker's independence of mind in regard to matters of doctrine must have awakened the sympathetic interest of one who had given the best years of his life to the defence of civil and religious liberty. Milton had long before this emancipated himself from ecclesiastical bondage ; he had abandoned the Presbyterianism of his riper years as he had given up the Church of his youth ; he had made the discovery that " New Presbyter is but Old Priest writ large." With him the exercise of private judgment was an inalienable privilege, deriving its sanction from that inward inspiration which possessed equal authority with the sacred writings as a guiding power and a rule of life. George Fox's doctrine of individual inspiration went even farther, for he held that it is " not the Scriptures, but the Holy Spirit, by which opinions and religions are to be tried " ; and this, of course, was nothing more or less than the assertion of the supremacy of reason in a pious form. It was the extreme point of reaction against the arrogance of authority, and even Milton could not go so far. We know too that he did not follow Fox's views with regard to oaths, military service, and the preaching of women. But the simplicity, the intense conviction, and the consistent life of the Quakers must have won his admiration no less than

their rejection of the tyranny of creeds.

We continue to ascend the valley of the Misbourne, until, after a walk of more than two miles, we pause by a stile where a pathway leads down through the meadows to the margin of the little stream. A row of elms and chestnuts stands by the running water, and a venerable church tower looks down at us from over their topmost branches ; while through the spaces between the leafless boughs we can see the roofs and gables of a picturesque hamlet, nestling closely amid orchards and gardens, and sheltered on all sides by gentle wooded hills. A faint wreath of blue smoke floats lazily in the clear atmosphere overhead ; and the soft rays of the winter sun, as they fall upon the quaint old houses, mark their irregular outlines and add richness to the colouring of their dark red walls. It is Chalfont St. Giles, the refuge of Milton, and the birthplace of *Paradise Lost*. We pass down the meadow, and crossing the clear swift brook we find ourselves in the village churchyard.

The church is an ancient building of chequered flint, brick, and stone, with windows of two lights divided by mullions. It is Sunday, and the bells are ringing for the afternoon service ; so we enter, passing between six young villagers who are pulling lustily at the ropes and appear to be accomplished ringers. We look at the curious old frescoes on the walls, and at the effigy of Thomas Fleetwood—great-grandfather of the two regicides and of Cromwell's son-in-law—who kneels in full armour with his two wives and eighteen children behind him, the girls with little mob-caps, the boys bare-headed with frills round their necks. But there is nothing here to remind us of Milton, and it is probable that he never was within these walls.

For Milton was no church-goer ; he worshipped in a temple made without hands. Alone in the grandeur of his spiritual isolation, like Moses amid the august solitudes of Sinai, he held con-

verse with the Supreme Being in the remote elevated region to which his own sublimity of thought had raised him. To one who has reached such a mental altitude the ministrations of a fellow-creature are but a hindrance, being inevitably devoid of sympathy, and rites and ceremonies lose their meaning, for the teachings of symbolism are unnecessary for the instruction of superior intelligence. It was this magnificent seclusion of mind, deepened during the composition of *Paradise Lost*, and immensely furthered by abstention from political and religious controversy since the Restoration, that had already withdrawn Milton from the narrowness of contemporary orthodoxies, and given him something of that calm, that almost prophetic clearness of vision, which had been the prayer of his youth in *Il Penseroso*. For soon after his departure from Chalfont we find him advocating a wide and almost universal toleration, speaking gently of Prelacy and the Church of his early years, and only excepting Popery from his scheme of general indulgence. To err, he says, is human, and God is merciful to the sincere seeker after truth. Many of his own doctrines—such as that of the inferiority of the Second Person of the Trinity, and of the lawfulness in certain circumstances of polygamy—were heterodox in the extreme, and enough to separate him from any of the religious sects of his day. The more he diverged from contemporary formulas the greater became his religious toleration ; and if he still made some reservations, the only wonder is that they were so few. But though Milton had learned to speak gently of the Church, he could not accept her ministrations. To his mind a State-paid minister was a “hireling” who had “subscribed slave,” and with such a one he could not enter into spiritual brotherhood.

But the bells have long since ceased to ring, and the six young men who were pulling the ropes have departed. They have fulfilled their duty in summoning others to prayer, and they have

something else to do this fine Sunday afternoon. We remain till the conclusion of the service, and then passing through the churchyard, and beneath an archway that pierces an ancient gable adorned with dark oak tracery, we find ourselves on the village green. What a picture of repose and perfect tranquillity ! Not a sound breaks the stillness of the winter afternoon, for the little hamlet is resting ; the worshippers have dispersed to their homes, and the voices of busy life are hushed. We stand and gaze down the wide grassy expanse to where, at the further end, the ducks are sleeping by the quiet pool, and the elms and chestnuts are spreading out their giant arms, as though in protection of the little community beneath. On either hand the lowly dwellings stand grouped with a picturesquely absence of design ; a moss-grown gable, a projecting chimney, an ivy-clad porch, a length of crumbling richly-tinted garden wall over which the boughs of the apple-trees are bending, a dusky, warmly-thatched barn, with eaves where the swallows nestle in the short summer nights. Two or three villagers stand together in the centre of the green, but we cannot hear their voices ; a veteran in his shirt-sleeves leans by the door of his cottage, smoking his pipe and seemingly lost in reflection ; a cart-horse is nibbling the grass close by and enjoying his day of rest. There is no other suggestion of life till a pretty black-eyed girl passes us accompanied by a sturdy young rustic. They are going for the Sunday walk to which they have been looking forward throughout six long days of toil ; they are happy, we think, but they do not speak, and perhaps they have nothing to say. We watch them as they pass—Corydon in his Sunday suit of shining black, Phyllis in her smart brown jacket ; they seem to care as little for what “hypocrites austere talk,” as for the risk of their neighbours’ raillery. It may be that there are neither hypocrites nor busybodies in this old-world nook.

The aspect of the village can have changed but little since Milton came here in the year of the plague. It was time to depart from London. The gloom of death had fallen over the stricken city, and the watch-fires were burning in the streets, revealing the corpses of the dead and the agonies of the dying, and throwing a flickering light upon the house-doors marked with crosses to show that the pestilence had found its victims within. It must have been a relief to the blind, heart-broken old man to breathe the country air again, and to know that he was once more in the Buckinghamshire fields. And yet there was something peculiarly sad in this return to a neighbourhood in which he had spent the happiest days of his life. For scarce a dozen miles away lay Horton, the last resting-place of his mother, and the scene of his tranquil youth, where he had spent five happy years culling the flowers of ancient and modern literature, and enjoying with all the zest of young receptive genius those enchanting visions of country life and scenery which throw their spell over his earlier poetry. From this delightful retreat came forth *L’Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, the twin idyls in which Nature is viewed through her reflection upon a twofold mirror of the human mind ; *Lycidas*, the noblest dirge and the most exquisite pastoral in the English tongue ; *Comus*, the so-called masque, with its “Dorique delicacy” of lyric lay and majestic march of metre. No lesser offspring could have arisen from this union of youthful genius with Nature at her fairest. But what a contrast between the second sojourn in Buckinghamshire and the first ! The country scenery that had charmed the poet’s youth—the “hedgerow elms on hillocks green,” the “russet lawns and fallows gray,” the upland hamlets—and Chalfont may have been one of them—with their “secure delight” and jocund festivals upon a “sunshine holiday,” the “cottage chimney” smoking between the oaks, the

"archèd walks of twilight groves"—all had faded away like some radiant dream of the early night in the long dark hours that follow; and though the voices of the fields may have brought back to him some ray of departed brightness, some half-forgotten pictures of the past, the vision could only bring with it a reflective melancholy in place of a fresh creative inspiration. For not only had his blindness severed Milton from the world of Nature, but chilly age and the failure of a noble cause had parted him from sympathy with his fellow-men; the hand of the musician had lost its cunning, nor could it again touch those rare spontaneous chords which ravish our human senses and speak to our human hearts.

And so it is that *Paradise Regained*, which was written here, breathes but faintly the aroma of the woods and fields. There are, indeed, a few delightful homely touches—such as the description of the aged peasant,

Following, as seemed, the quest of some
stray ewe,
Or withered sticks to gather, which might
serve
Against winter's day, when winds blow
keen,
To warm him wet returned from field at
eve;

or that of the disconsolate disciples, "plain fishermen," who "close in a cottage low together got" by a creek in Jordan, "Where winds with reeds and osiers whispering play," bewailed their absent Master; or the charming pastoral scene later on, when, as the night wore out,

the herald lark
Left his ground nest, high towering to
desry
The morn's approach, and greet her with
his song,

where we seem to recognise once more the inspirations of Horton reawakened by the rustic environment at Chalfont St. Giles. But these are only a few stray flashes of the picturesque across a night of rhetoric; for already an

"age too late" and "a climate cold" as Milton himself complains, had quenched the fire of his poetic fancy.

And what an interval had separated these two periods of retirement in the Buckinghamshire fields! The long years of the Latin Secretaryship lay between—years of strife and fanatical controversy, which had injured the poet's health, destroyed his eyesight, and consumed the best energies of his ripened intellect. And now the cause of freedom was to all appearance lost, and the result to Milton was poverty, solitude, infirmity, ruin; and to his friends exile, proscription, death. The revels of the Restoration, the orgies of Whitehall, from which he prays for deliverance, had now continued for five years:—

But drive far off the barbarous dissonance
Of Bacchus and his revellers, the race
Of that wild rout that tore the Thracian
bard
In Rhodope, when woods and rocks had
ears
To rapture, till the savage clamour drowned
Both harp and voice.

And the prayer was heard; for during these years of darkness that serene majestic mind had soared into a higher region, from which it had been too long held back by the bonds of religious and political strife. In the defeat of his cause lay Milton's triumph, and the Restoration had given us *Paradise Lost*. Herein lay the consolation of the aged poet,

On evil days though fallen and evil tongues,
In darkness and with dangers compassed
round,

for his was now the restful happiness of one whose life-work is complete. The great epic for which he had been preparing from his early youth, "long choosing and beginning late," and rejecting every call save that of duty to the defence of liberty, was at last accomplished; and when Milton came here, bearing with him the precious manuscript, nothing was wanting but a few final touches to bring to its

realization the cherished dream of his life.

But it is time to visit the poet's dwelling, so we turn and ascend the hill behind us, at the foot of which the village green narrows into an irregular street. We reach the end of the village, where two venerable elms are standing by a barn, and a wicket-gate leads into a little garden. We pass through, and find ourselves at the door of Milton's house. It is a picturesque modest little abode, somewhat superior to the ordinary labourer's cottage, with a half timber gable of dark oak beams and weather-stained plaster, and windows with diamond-shaped panes looking out on a pleasant view of hedgerows and sloping greensward. A bellows-shaped chimney projects into the road; on the house-wall facing the garden is a small plate bearing the name of Milton, and higher up is a coat-of-arms said to be that of the Fleetwoods. We enter, and pass into a low dark room, in which, we are told, *Paradise Regained* was dictated. A narrow oak staircase leads to a loftier chamber above, the poet's bedroom, where he was wont to compose in the morning hours while still resting in bed. For his health was already declining, and he no longer rose at four or five in the morning, as had been his wont. After rising he heard a chapter of the Hebrew Bible read; then he breakfasted and had books read to him, or he dictated till twelve, then he took a short walk, dined at one, spent the afternoon in his garden or strolling about the neighbourhood, or, if the weather was unfavourable, playing the organ. In the evening he would see his friends, such as Penington or Elwood, from six to eight, and entertain them to a quiet supper. When they had departed he had "a pipe of tobacco" and a glass of water, and retired to rest. And so the tranquil uneventful days passed by.

It was within these walls that *Paradise Lost* first left its author's hands. "Some little time," says

Elwood, "before I went to Aylesbury Prison I was desired by my quondam master Milton to take an house for him. I took a pretty Box for him in Giles's Chalfont, a mile from me, of which I gave him notice." After his release from prison Elwood visited the poet here, who delivered to him a manuscript which he bade him take home and read at his leisure. "I found," says Elwood, "it was that excellent Poem which he had entitled *Paradise Lost*. After I had read it through I made him another visit and returned him his book. He asked me what I thought of it? which I modestly but freely told him; and after some further discourse I pleasantly said to him, 'Thou hast said much here of *Paradise Lost*, but what hast thou to say to *Paradise Found*? ' He made no answer, but sat some time in a muse. . . . When afterwards I went to wait on him (in London) he showed me his second Poem called *Paradise Regained*, and in a pleasant tone said to me, 'This is owing to you; for you put it into my Head by the Question you put to me at Chalfont.' " It is probable that the last few hundred lines of *Paradise Lost* were written here, and there is a picturesque touch at the close of the poem, describing how the evening mist

Risen from a river o'er the marish glides
And gathers ground fast at the labourer's
heel
Homeward returning,

which perhaps contains a reminiscence of the valley of the Misbourne.

We pass again into the little garden with its chrysanthemums and fragrant lavender, its leafless twigs of woodbine, and faded sunflowers and holly-hocks—now forlorn and dripping in the winter damp, reminding us of the pleasant autumn days that are fled. At the further end of the narrow path, so often paced by the poet's feet, a windlass stands over a well; and here we pause to look once more at the humble dwelling which once sheltered the sublimest genius of the seventeenth

century. As we gaze upon its crumbling walls, where the last rays of sunset are fondly lingering still, we seem to look through a vista of the past. We see the blind old man sitting by the door as he was wont, in his coat of coarse gray cloth, with his beautiful auburn locks, now streaked with silver, falling on his shoulders, and his blue eyes, sightless though "clear to outward view of blemish or of spot," filled with sympathy as he listens to the Quaker lad beside him, who tells with eager but deferential accents how he has suffered imprisonment for conscience' sake, and how the blight of persecution has already fallen upon his young life. They rise, and the youth gently and reverently leads his companion to the little wicket-gate and out into the quiet lane. They are gone; and the sunlight has vanished from the moss-grown gable. It is time to go hence.

But our pilgrimage is still incomplete, for not far away there is a hal洛ed spot which we must not leave unvisited. We turn to the left, and follow the road to where a few houses are clustering together in the pleasant upland fields, and a small brick meeting-house stands by a quiet little burial-ground. It is the hamlet of

Jordans, the Mecca of Quakerdom, the Campo Santo of the Society of Friends. Here, undivided in their last long slumber, Isaac Penington and Thomas Elwood and William Penn, the apostles of the brotherhood, rest side by side in the perfect attainment of that peace which they loved and taught, but which in life it was never given them to enjoy. No monument, not even a headstone, marks the spot where they lie; there is nothing save the heaving mounds of greensward, now faintly discernible in the soft afterglow, to show where these heroes of a pure Christianity repose after their life-long labour. We pause by the door of the little chapel; beneath the fifth mound from us, we are told, lies William Penn; on either side are his two wives; a little further lies Thomas Elwood; the site of Penington's resting-place is unknown. But the shadow of night is falling, and we have already lingered too long. We leave them sleeping in the dim still twilight, these venerable fathers of a simple faith, true followers of the ideal of the Nazarene; the rude blast of persecution cannot break their slumber here, for they rest in the peace that passeth understanding.

J. D. B.

BAKSHEESH.

THERE are not many words, even among those of foreign extraction, of which the orthography offers no less than thirteen alternatives. We have however the authority of the great English dictionary now issuing (very deliberately) from the Clarendon Press for declaring that Baksheesh is one of the few which enjoy this privilege. Originally of Persian origin, it seems to have made its first appearance in Western literature very soon after the death of Shakespeare, for in 1625 we find "bacsheese (as they say in the Arabick tongue) that is gratis freely" (*Purchas, Pilgrimes*, ii., 1340). Whether or no the term ever really had this meaning it were difficult now to determine, but assuredly for many years past it has signified something very different. In what may be called its most vulgar and aggravating sense it is the first word to greet the Eastern traveller and the last to ring in his ears as he turns his face homeward. Probably no other single vocable rises with such persistent frequency as this to the lips of the dusky Oriental. It is like what mathematicians call a constant quantity, a ground-discord which underlies his every chord, a sort of spectral diapason from which there is no escape. Nothing in nature suggests more vividly the importunate system of the two daughters of the horseleech. A Neapolitan beggar is sometimes not easy to shake off, but sooner or later there comes an end to his pestering; we must go further south and east to interview the past-masters of the craft, who will take no denial, and on whose pachydermatous consciences the rudest rebuff makes no impression whatever.

Nevertheless it is not for the mere reiteration of the cry, "Give, Give,"

that the principle of Baksheesh deserves to be studied. That is but one phase, the lowest and noisest, of its multifarious nature, and one, too, that is to be met with more or less all the world over. It is admirably illustrated in our own country where, on one pretext or another, a perennial course of dunning is carried on. The beggar in the streets, indeed, plies his trade in these days with some diffidence, for political economy has decided that to encourage him is to prejudice the general weal. But the beggar in the pulpit, and the beggar in *The Times*, are beyond the reach of coercive legislation, and accordingly still drive a roaring trade. There are however in all countries, other and more refined developments of Baksheesh which it is interesting to trace. In some special forms, as we shall see, it has almost attained to the dignity of a fine art. Its successful practice demands a perspicacity and knowledge of character which are by no means universally distributed. In fact it is as far as possible removed from the indiscriminate largess to which the tourist in, let us say, Cairo or the Levant, finds himself invited and, as often as not, thanks to his dragoman, committed. There it is a mere question of nickel and patience, excellent discipline for one whose temper is short, whatever the length of his purse, but hardly calculated to exercise the higher faculties of caution and tact. He must needs go away somewhat poorer than he came, but it is scarcely possible for him to mismanage the business provided he keep his temper and cling not too tenaciously to the bawbees. The only danger is lest, as many tourists do, he fail to grasp the humour of the situation, and proceed to a futile exhibition of

wrath garnished with copious imprecations. Or, if controversially given, he may seek to improve the occasion by lecturing on thrift and honesty much in the tone he would adopt towards a tramp on a Berkshire highway. Whereas he ought simply to aim at being good-humoured and liberal ; for the display of any more complex virtues there is in his present emergency absolutely no scope.

Despite all exhortation to the contrary, there is perhaps no maxim of wider acceptance in business and even in private circles than the time-honoured *quid pro quo* ; the first person singular and the main chance are to this day our favourite minor deities. There is a concurrence of testimony to the effect that it was always so and among all nations. The few beacons of disinterestedness which brighten the selfish path of history, while charming in themselves, only serve to accentuate the prevailing dead level so tersely depicted by the poet Clough :

Each for himself is still the rule,
We learn it when we go to school,
The devil take the hindmost, O !

We may unhappily take it for granted that among the great majority of mankind it is an established rule to do nothing for nothing ; on the other hand, every man has his price. Now this illustrates very satisfactorily some of the byways of Baksheesh. That ingenuous diarist, Master Samuel Pepys, tells us how on one occasion "the sayle-maker Mr. Harris" sent him "a noble present of two large silver candlesticks and snuffers, and a slice to keep them upon, which indeed is very handsome." And again, under date January 1st, 1668 : "presented from Captain Beckford with a noble silver warming-pan, which I am doubtful whether to take or no." In modern English these little transactions on the part of Messrs. Harris and Beckford would no doubt be styled "paying commission." They were not simple presents from friend to friend, nor did they represent

payment for goods actually received from the accommodating Clerk of the Acts. None the less were they payments, and there had been, or would be, "value received." Ships must have sails—two centuries ago, at any rate, the proposition could not be disputed—and sail-making on a large scale is profitable. The good word of the Clerk might mean to Mr. Harris a fine haul of nobles and angels. When promotion hinges on interest rather than merit it is expedient to have a friend at court, and doubtless in the end Captain Beckford was not allowed to feel that his warming-pan had been thrown away. Whether prospective or retrospective these Pepysian presentations are excellent instances of Baksheesh in the sense of a gratuity to one who has rendered, or will render, some service, but who is neither morally nor legally entitled to any special payment. In this century there is no such compunctions feeling about accepting these *ἀδωρα δῶρα*—to use the familiar Greek oxymoron—as "Dapper Dickey" seems to have experienced. It is whispered that nowadays they are demanded as a right in many departments of trade, and thus Baksheesh is straightway metamorphosed into blackmail. Certain revelations touching the Metropolitan Board of Works pointed to a very elaborate system of *quid pro quo*, for which of course the long-suffering rate-payer had to find the money. In the case of Pepys nobody was a penny the worse. Somebody must supply the sails ; and if Pepys was two candlesticks and a slice the better, we must rather congratulate him on his good fortune than condemn him for accepting them. It would be thought nothing of now. And yet candlesticks, snuffers, slice, and warming-pan probably made this too squeamish Clerk for the moment really uncomfortable, every one of them ; Pepys was within an ace of showing himself a hero. However, "in spite of all temptation," he remained a man.

But the services of the mint or the silversmith are not always necessary to effect this variety of Baksheesh ; sometimes the honorarium takes a less tangible form, though it answers precisely the same purpose. In an age like the present which has enacted such dire penalties for anything savouring of bribery and corruption it would never do to present a political supporter, for instance, with a warming-pan. Here the finesse of the art is brought into play. A man who is far too honourable to take anything of intrinsic value in return for his speeches and organizing labours in behalf of the party, who would scorn candlesticks, even were they legal, may nevertheless be rewarded and made happy in a variety of ways which, if not altogether above suspicion, are certainly unimpeachable in the literal sense of the word. If he be substantial, and ambitious of courtly precedence, all his toil, his canvassings and provincial harangues, will have been amply recompensed should he receive a barren title, barren in the eyes of others, but abundantly fruitful in his own. Even bishoprics have not always been conferred on the score of profound learning or ecclesiastical fitness. The days are indeed past when the mitre figured on the battlefield, but it is not so very long since it was a force to reckon with in the field of parliamentary debate. Or he may yearn for office, and it is expedient to secure him, for he would be a dangerous foe. He will throw the weight of his tongue into the scale of the highest bidder ; therefore his tongue must be bought at any price, lest the enemy get hold of it and him. Let us make him a baronet, then, or a bishop, or an under-secretary, and without delay. Or, again, he may peradventure not be ambitious for himself, yet longs for the advancement of his friends or relations. His son, perhaps, or his son-in-law, would fain enter the lists of the political joust, and he is anxious that he should do so under favourable and influential aus-

pices. It is politic to administer to him his dose of Baksheesh in the shape which we know will be most palatable ; then he becomes, unless his sense of honourable dealing be sadly dull, our friend for life, or at any rate for the session. These little matters must all be well within the ken of the Government which means to be strong and popular with its own party. The important thing is to do nothing so glaring in the way of largess or nepotism as to provoke discredit and embarrassing questions. Short of this, political Baksheesh, now as ever, is a most valuable tool, and all really great statesmen have learned to handle it with consummate dexterity.

The Spanish proverb says, "To give is honour, and to ask is grief (*El dar es honor, y el pedir dolor*)."¹ But that is not the view taken by a large proportion of mankind, whose conduct rather proves that, were such an apophthegm submitted to their judgment, they would instantly discard it as being what Charles Lamb somewhere calls "a vile scrag-of-mutton sort of sophism." The prevailing sentiment in these practical days is rather that whatever is worth having is worth asking for, and the antiquated notion of waiting for an offer is very seldom allowed to intervene between a man and that at which he aims. It is easy to see why this is so. Life is now lived at such a rapid rate, and there are so many competitors in every race, that it is no longer advisable, from the commercial point of view, to wait until hidden merit is detected and an offer of advancement is made. When once we are safely past school and college we are taken, within certain easily definable limits, pretty much at our own valuation. No competent inquirer will issue from the busy throng to investigate our ability and provide us with a suitable field for its exhibition. Naturally, therefore, any old prejudice which may have existed against asking, or against taking without the consciousness of having fairly

earned, is now quite out of fashion ; where, as now and again happens, it does crop up, it not only meets with no sympathy or encouragement, but is usually denounced as Quixotic, if not idiotic. Such foolish modesty is entirely out of touch with the spirit of the age. The cry for Baksheesh, then, in this form or in that, is yearly growing louder and louder. It is heard in all strata of society. If we want to lease a house we are as likely as not to discover that, besides the rent, there is what is mysteriously called a premium to be paid before we can claim possession. The very dustman demands, and is paid, a certain sum by the householders for doing work which he has already contracted with wholly different parties to perform at a fixed wage. It is at the bottom of all the strikes which have latterly undermined and demoralized the old relations subsisting between master and man. The professional agitator long ago determined to what war-cry his regiments would most surely rally ; it is, Baksheesh. Early and late he has dinned it into their ears, and at last they have learnt the lesson so perfectly that they will never forget it again. They have realized that it is the most powerful of all words in the vocabulary, and they shout it each year with more gusto and effect. Never was so effective a cry, if only kept up long enough, and yet so simple withal, a mere word constantly repeated like a Musselman's Allahs. It has succeeded time out of mind at the Pyramids, and now it has taken firm root wherever an a leaque volume of lung-power can be brought to bear. It bids fair to drown all other war-cries for a long time to come.

There remains, however, a phase of the epidemic, or endemic as it has really been this many a day, which is not necessarily calculated to excite the indignation of the virtuous. Aristotle's True Gentleman (according to some authorities possibly the greatest prig ever described in letter-press)

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would no doubt have scorned Baksheesh in any shape, but the humble variety now to be considered would have been specially obnoxious to him. He, it will be remembered, is the eccentric character who "prefers possessions that are noble, and that bear no profit, to such as are of profit and utility, for he thus more thoroughly shows his independence." He likewise "feels shame at receiving a favour" and "justly despises his neighbours, for his estimate is always right." It would have been quite impossible to "tip" him ; and it is this process, as it commonly obtains, which seems to suggest itself as worthy of a brief survey, the operations on a more magnificent scale having been already indicated at sufficient length.

The few students of the present generation who may live long enough to see the letter T attacked by Dr. Murray and the Clarendon Press will probably enjoy the pleasure of learning, on the best folio authority, at what period the now indispensable Tip first came into the English language. It is, at any rate, as old, in this sense, as Swift, in whose poem of *The Legion Club*, written in the year 1736, we find the lines :—

When I saw the keeper frown,
Tipping him with half-a-crown,
"Now," I said, "we are alone,
Name your heroes one by one."

But its history has yet to be written, for the elaborate Slang Dictionary of Messrs. Barrère and Leland makes no attempt to trace the origin and biography of this most fascinating of all monosyllables. The little that is known about it is scarcely to its credit. The etymologist assures us that it is closely allied to *tap* and may be recognized without much difficulty in both *tip-ple* and *tip-sy*. These are certainly disreputable cousins to acknowledge. Yet it cannot be denied that too often the destination of the tip is the tap, and perhaps we ought to congratulate ourselves

that our language expresses the kinship in a less brutal fashion than some foreign tongues. There is nothing poetical, nothing even smart, about *Trinkgeld* or *pourboire*. But in the case of our British equivalent, we are able, with a slight loosening of fancy's rein, to picture in our mind's eye the tip-tilted goblet, brimming with the bravest vintages of our island, and drained in honour of all that is fair and of good report. We could never evolve this from mere "drink-money," about which no halo of poetry or romance could by any possibility gather.

Speaking generally, it may be said that the Tip differs from the more pronounced Baksheesh in that it is usually concerned with small matters and, though none the less expected and unavoidable, is rarely demanded with offensive clamour as a right. In their essence they are for the most part identical, both being payments to which the payee is entitled on no legal or moral grounds. Some sort of service, already amply requited, is indeed in most cases the peg upon which is made to hang the pretext for advancing the claim at all, but there is also a species of tip which cannot be distinguished from a free gift, without any regard to benefit received or promised. Of this kind is the schoolboy's tip, the pleasantest of all varieties in the eyes of both donor and recipient. No monetary successes in after life can for a moment compare with the unalloyed charm of a totally unexpected sovereign towards the end of term, when cash is uncomfortably tight and some few disbursements have yet to be effected. This is undoubtedly the purest of all known financial pleasures. The first money fairly earned by the sweat of our brow or brain is very sweet; but by that time we have probably developed a calculating faculty which is apt to dull the keen edge of enjoyment. We begin to think not only how far it will go, but how long it will be before

we may depend upon receiving a second instalment. The schoolboy lives entirely in and for the present alone; give him either a shilling or a five-pound note, and his sole object is to convert it with all the speed he may into whatever his soul chiefly desires (as a rule, comestibles), recking nothing of the future, a paragon of happy carelessness and unthrift. But although the term is applied to him perhaps more frequently than it occurs in any other connection, its meaning is simply synonymous with gift, for he has probably done nothing, and will do nothing, to deserve any such pecuniary recognition. It very rarely acts as a stimulus to increased intellectual exertion. Nay, if it is his nature to be indolent, he will be as lazy as Belacqua still, for all the golden shower that is so lavishly rained upon him.

In almost all other circumstances, the real tip, that which is universal in civilized life, is bestowed upon one who is presumed to be inferior to the donor, not only in worldly wealth, but in social position also. Moreover there must exist some semblance of justification for it; in other words it ought to reflect, however faintly, the grand principle of *quid pro quo*. Stern moralists preach a periodical crusade against the practice of tipping railway-porters. Why, is their cry, should we fee a man for doing what he is paid by others to do, under pain of instant dismissal if he accept a farthing from passengers? Why indeed? There is no warrant save that of custom for such an anomaly. The man who gave the first tip to the first porter is alone responsible, for he established a precedent the effect of which will be felt so long as there is a permanent way extant. Why again, they ask, is the threat of summary removal from the company's service never carried into effect? Was ever a porter known, in the annals of railway history, to lose his place for accepting a shilling? Never; and for the excellent reason that the porters' superior

officers would at that rate most of them have to go too, all being pretty much tarred with the same brush in this respect. No grade is too exalted to take its Baksheesh.

When a porter shoulders a portmanteau or calls a cab most men find it very difficult to realize that he is not placing them under a certain obligation, which they ought in fairness to acknowledge by means of a small fee. Very few, at any rate, care to argue the point, or to accept the service without tendering some remuneration. If they do, the result is likely to be unpleasant, and unpleasantness in a public place is always to be avoided. The feeding of hotel servants, that is, in many cases, relieving the proprietor of the burden of wages, is accepted with equal meekness as a necessary evil. Here however we may excuse our weakness by putting forward our sympathy with the recipients of our bounty, who would otherwise make but a poor income. But why should we pay another man's servants? The absurdity of the custom must be recognized by all, though none have the courage to break through it. Its best excuse is its antiquity. In those painfully exact accounts of his daily expenditure which were kept by Gilbert White we constantly meet with such entries as the following : "Gave the Drawer at the Blue Boar, 1s : gave Mr. Parker's man of Trin. Coll. 1s : servants at Chilgrove and Chichester, 6s." These tips were bestowed more than a century ago, and no doubt many account-books of much older date if forthcoming would tell the same tale. In fact there is good reason to believe that in earlier days the tax was even more general than it is to-day, or, at least, that it obtained where now it is no longer admitted. Occasionally it was resisted, and with success, as is proved by the following curious extract from Owen and Blakeway's *History of Shrewsbury*. Under date September, 1766, we read :—"Vails were abolished in Shropshire by a resolution passed at

the Infirmary meeting. The grand jury at the summer assizes had passed a similar resolution just before. It needs hardly be said that this was a fee expected by a gentleman's servants from every guest that dined at their master's table ; a custom now preserved only at the official dinners given by the judges of assize upon the circuit." Imagine a grand jury of the present day abolishing, or even regulating, the tips hitherto recorded in the servants' hall of a private household!

In most continental capitals the drivers of public conveyances in addition to their legally graduated tariff receive as a matter of course a small bonus, which is demanded as a due if not spontaneously offered. This privilege, if not actually authorized by law, is at any rate never called in question, and, if it were disputed, no sort of redress would follow. The London cabman, on the contrary, occupies a position which is unique among Automedons. He is not invariably satisfied (who ever is!) with his legal payment, and sometimes estimates his distances on a more liberal scale than Gunter's chain would endorse, but he never condescends to demand a tip. In this particular he contrasts very favourably with his kind over seas. It is not that he is impervious to the charm of Baksheesh ; but his soul, as a general rule, is too great to admit of his taking a mean advantage of his "fare." It may be also that he dreads some tampering with his license at the hands of a meddlesome magistrate. Whatever the source of his modesty, he alone among public characters goes untipped. Let this be remembered in his favour when he next risks his fortunes in a strike.

With this exception, however, the opportunity of distributing gratuities, which are ostensibly within our free-will but in reality are as compulsory and inevitable as fate, is practically universal. The thing must be done ; that much is acknowledged ; but all men cannot do it with a good grace. The Art of Tipping embraces

a variety of styles, and a handsome fee grudgingly disposed is sometimes not so highly esteemed as a sixpence given pleasantly. Richard Jefferies was not a humorous writer, but there is nevertheless a very amusing passage in his *Gamekeeper at Home*, where the hero of the work is supposed to be describing his experience of tips and tippers. It exhibits the various types so succinctly and happily that it may well be quoted at length, for a keeper is an excellent judge in such matters, and he thinks that nothing reveals a gentleman's character so clearly as his behaviour in this respect at the close of a day's shooting.

Gentlemen [he says] is very curious in tips, and there ain't nothing so difficult as to know what's coming. Most in general them as be the biggest guns, and what you would think would come out handsome, chucks you a crown and no more ; and them as you knows ain't much go in the way of money slips a sovereign into your fist. There's a deal in the way of giving it too, as perhaps you wouldn't think. Some gents does it as much as to say they're much obliged to you for kindly taking it. Some does it as if they were chucking a bone to a dog. One place where I was, the governor were the haughtiest man as ever you see. When the shooting was done—after a great party, you never knew whether he were pleased or not—he never took no more notice of you than if you were a tree. But I found him out arter a time or two. You had to walk close behind him, as if you were a spaniel, and by and by he would slip his hand round behind his back—without a word, mind—and you had to take what was in it, and never touch your hat or so much as "Thank you, sir." It were always a five-pound note if the shooting had been good ; but it never seemed to come so sweet as if he'd done it to your face.

The gamekeeper, it must be admitted, has somewhat lordly notions, but his position is peculiar and he is exceptionally fortunate in having usually to deal with well-to-do patrons. Moreover he is probably the man of all others to whom a tip is seldom grudged,

and there can be but few of his standing in society who can afford to talk so contemptuously of "a crown and no more." What would have been Thomas Carlyle's verdict on such lavish bounty ? If we are to believe his biographer he was an essentially liberal soul ; but he probably did not throw away much in tips. In one of his letters stands recorded an episode which gives us a tolerably correct insight into his views on this subject. He found himself on one occasion at the Bell Inn at Gloucester, which he grimly describes as "a section of Bedlam." When he was about to take his departure, as he hoped, "for all time and all eternity," he remembered, or was reminded, that, before this might be, a certain little formality must get itself transacted, which awaits us all on taking leave of such establishments. This is his account of it : "The dirty scrub of a waiter grumbled about his allowance, which I reckoned liberal. I added sixpence to it, and produced a bow which I was near rewarding with a kick. Accursed be the race of flunkies ! " The Boots complained next. "As they were never to meet more through all eternity," the Boots was allowed a second sixpence also ; and so the philosopher went his way.

Not all men, however, have even the moral courage to offer what they reckon liberal, if that estimate is at all likely to fall short of his or hers who stands with expectant palm. We give what we believe to be customary, concealing with what success we may our chagrin at having to fee with an air of grateful alacrity those whom for the time being we regard as arrant extortions, and whose bowings and scrapings are odious in our eyes. But it is at Christmas that our cup is at its fullest and threatens to run over. For then all the powers which preside over Baksheesh seem to be leagued against us, while we ourselves are without a claim to advance against any one else. The drain upon our resources in our own

family circle is serious enough, but when to this we add the hoarse chorus of unblushing outsiders who seek to prey upon our poor balance, life for the moment is hard to live, and remain solvent. We acknowledge the justice of the postman's overtures, but would fain repudiate those of the lamp-lighter, and our gorge rises when we interview the turncock. Why should we be called upon to conciliate other men's servants, who would be at once dismissed were they to leave us in darkness or with taps run dry? Can the butcher's boy reduce us to starvation, or the librarian's messenger restrict us to sermons and fifth-rate poetry, if we withhold the accustomed dole? We dare not put it

to the touch, but weakly, sometimes even with affected jocularity, resign ourselves to our fate. Year after year we somehow manage to survive the crisis, however fervent our inward groans and grumbles. We console ourselves with the cheap reflection that, after all, no man was ever yet known to be ruined solely by his Christmas gratuities, and we think that on the whole it is better to part with our shillings and half-crowns than offend all the regular callers at our back-door. For all that, we are the victims of an unwarrantable tax, sanctioned indeed by custom, but scouted by reason and by common sense.

ARTHUR GAYE.

THE BLESSED OPAL;

OR,

THE STORY OF THE FIFTY-THREE GENERALS.

It was at the time when Mexico, in its impatience of rulers under ordinary designations, was consenting to be more or less controlled by a military official whom the public knew as the Governor, and by a subordinate, a privileged *fidus Achates* known to the people as the Lieutenant. It was also the year in Mexico when the fashion in *sombreros* was in the direction of the lowest crowns.

The Governor commented on this fact to his Lieutenant, as they sat under the shade of the trees in the great *plaza*. The scent of the flowers from the market round the corner of the cathedral was wafted to them. The flower-girls were there, in the circular arbour and the booths, tying up bouquets of violets and roses, though the calendar called it winter. It was a paradise of flowers, if not of lovely women.

The Lieutenant had nothing to add to his superior's observation about the *sombreros*.

"It is a beautiful building," the Governor said, by and by.

"Which?" the Lieutenant asked, for beautiful buildings surrounded them.

"The cathedral, of course," said his Excellency impatiently. "I should like to have seen it," he added presently, finding that the Lieutenant made no response to his admiration, "I should like to see it now—if only for a moment—restored to the likeness of the temple of the great god Huitzilopochtli. The Saints forgive me!—I mean it only as a spectacle. The Cross is triumphant. But think of it, Don Pedro—the great hideous image, the dancing priests, the yet live hearts upon the altar—that very altar that we see there in

the edifice devoted to the true service. Do you think it should be there, Don Pedro? Is it not a profanation? Should we not have it removed?"

"The altar stone is *not* there," Don Pedro answered drily, pointing westward. "It is in the National Museum. It is the calendar stone that is in the cathedral."

"Ah, yes—true, you are right."

A green lizard glanced along the bough of a tree towards the Governor's head. It shone in the sun like a living emerald, and it seemed to wait for his next words.

"Still, do you not think we should remove it?"

The Lieutenant did not answer. He was a man of few words, and no theologian.

The Governor twirled his moustaches thoughtfully. He wore immense black moustaches, twisted out on either side. His eye and his nose were accipitral, and his dark face revealed the strain of Montezuma with an admixture of the conquering blood.

"Just for a day—no, a moment—I should like to see it," he said, reverting to his former thought, "a great day of the great War-god. No, I should not like to see it, but just once to see a reproduction of it—without its fearful tortures. How many thousand human victims do they say were slain in a day on his altar?"

The Lieutenant again did not answer, but the Governor showed no offence. The two men knew each other. The Governor put these questions as to a second self. When the Lieutenant did not answer, it was equivalent to his saying that he did not know.

"My opal will not show me the past," the Governor said simply.

"I don't know," his second self observed, "that I altogether believe very much in that opal of yours."

"What, Lieutenant! Do I understand you to say you do not believe in it?"

A humming-bird, which had been playing about in one of the trees of the *plaza*, darted down and hovered as if struck by the flash of the Governor's eye. "Do you shoot?" a gentle American lady had once asked him—he was a favourite with ladies. "I do not shoot ze animal, madam, I keep zat for ze human," he had answered in his best American—which was not good. And the lady had declared that sparks of visible fire flew from his eyes as he said it—for which she admired him all the more. The humming-bird seemed similarly fascinated as it quivered—stationary, but with wings working at invisible speed—before the Governor as he repeated his question, "Do I understand that you do not believe in it? It has been blessed."

"I know," the Lieutenant answered; "yet even so I have my doubts of it."

"Then I discharge you, sir," the Governor cried, with energy that scared the humming-bird to its palm-tree again. "I discharge you from your position about my person, and from the service."

"With arrears of pay?"

"Without a cent."

"Ah, well, in that case—yes—I believe—anything—even your opal."

There was a silence. The Governor took out two cigars and handed one to the Lieutenant. The latter accepted it, and striking a light gave the match to the Governor, and so they sat, smoking.

Soon the Governor drew from his pocket an opal of great size and circular form. He kissed it reverently, polished it with caressant coat-sleeve—then held it and admired it, letting the sun play on it. "Is it not beautiful?" he asked. "A lady told me once that it had in it the ghosts of all the other stones. Is it not true?"

His second self did not speak, and

the Governor fell agazing into the luminous, dense depths of the stone. "I see trouble," he said presently, talking low, as if to himself. (The humming-bird had returned to spy out the glitter of the gem.) "Trouble—a wave of trouble—then a clearing of the clouds—they are dispelled—and amongst them walk—ah!" he started—"Indian warriors—one, two, three, Heavens, how many?" He continued counting, while the Lieutenant nearly slept beside him, till he came to fifty-two—then stopped.

"Heavens! Fancy fifty-two!"

"What?" the Lieutenant asked. "Opals? Ladies? Ghosts?"

"Generals," the Governor said fiercely.

"A heavy tax on the treasury—if it pays them," the other commented.

"Listen." He threw out his left foot before him, rested his left hand on his knee, the elbow outward, and, with the opal held in his right hand, turned himself half-round to his Lieutenant and expounded the visions of the opal. "I saw," he said, "mist and trouble—then sunshine and joy. In the midst of the joy walked Indian warriors, men of the race to which, on the one side, my ancestors belonged. Had they been clad in the guise familiar to us of the Indian warrior I had thought little. More I might have thought had they been decked in the splendour of the warriors of the Montezumas—in the gold, the cotton mail, the wondrous feather-work, the broideries. They were in none of these, Don Pedro—they bore the uniform of our full field-officers of to-day, although they were on foot."

He stopped, and looked at his Lieutenant to see his impression of the vision as narrated.

"It's a funny opal," the Lieutenant said, taking it from him. Then, after gazing at it awhile, he added, "I see none of these things in it."

The Governor took it back from him, and restored it to his pocket with the air of suggesting an opinion that the Lieutenant never would.

" You refer, I suppose," said the latter, rising to leave him after a moment's thought, " to the trouble at Montezutepec ? I will see about it to-morrow." He made a military salute to his superior and went across the *plaza* to the palace.

" Fifty-two, remember," the Governor called after him. " At one a week that will last a year." Then he strolled away to his carriage that stood awaiting him with its two fine bays, and the people turned and whispered to each other as he went, " It is the Governor."

He was stepping into his victoria when some one touched him on the shoulder. It was his Lieutenant. " Did the uniforms seem to have been ready-made or made to order ? "

" Ready-made, of course," his Excellency replied. " Misfits or even second-hand most of them."

" Very good. I will see to it to-morrow."

The longest and the shortest days of the Mexican year come ever crowding on each other's heels. The shortest day in all Mexican chronology is *hoy* (to-day); the longest of all days—so long that if all were accomplished in it that is planned the sun would never set on it—is *mañana* (to-morrow). If but just once *mañana* were to be translated into *hoy*, one would need another Joshua to cry "halt!" to the passage of the sun. But since Cortes set what he deemed a Christian foot in Vera Cruz, and again away before that, so far as one can learn, from the days of Aztec or earlier and gentler Toltec, *hoy* never in Mexican history has caught up *mañana*. Mexico lives and dies awaiting *mañana*, and so will continue to live and die while it is Mexican. The Lieutenant was an exception to this rule, so far as was possible for him to be, being Mexican. The *mañana* would in time arrive when he would attend to the business of the uniforms and of the fifty-two generals.

Now the trouble at Montezutepec had occurred on this wise. The municipal authorities had been injudicious,

They had attempted to enforce some of the laws. Naturally this was resented by the inhabitants of Montezutepec, who forthwith had carried the Court House by assault and put most of the offenders to death at the muzzle of the six-shooter. There was nothing unusual in this. Each morning on rising the Governor consulted his opal, as a kind of revolution barometer, to discuss the probabilities of rebellion. But on this occasion the insurrectionists seemed inclined to go beyond their recognised rights—and the Governor sent down his Lieutenant to punish them. They were in some force, had full possession of the town, and would take a good deal of punishing. Montezutepec is a fair-sized country town, and the flat roofs and barred windows of the houses are excellent vantage posts, as has been many times proved in Mexican warfare. Wherefore the Governor said, reading from the depths of his opal, " I perceive Indian warriors, and by them the brunt of the assault is borne."

The Lieutenant marched down without opposition into the neighbourhood of Montezutepec, and by strong threats, small gifts, and big promises obtained the assistance of a hardy local tribe of Indians. His plan of campaign was to divide forces. At a certain time, he said, the Indians should march into the town upon the north side, while he with his men having made a *détour*, would simultaneously invade the town from the south. So the two detachments parted for the night under orders to make a joint attack at daybreak the next morning. Day, however, appeared to have broken upon the Indians some hours or so earlier than it broke upon the Regulars; for though the former commenced their attack according to orders, they found themselves in vain expecting the assistance of the military, who were to have taken the city from the south. But the Lieutenant was not unobservant. It seemed to him more simple to wait to occupy the town until the Indians had been defeated, and the

fighting force of Montezutepec had departed in pursuit of them. Then he had but to march in, with all honours of war, and occupy the flat roofs and the houses with the barred windows, and the town and its vantage points would be his.

Matters turned out much according to the expectation of the Lieutenant, but not entirely so; for there are in the neighbourhood of Montezutepec, and a little to the north of it, the remains of huge pyramids, larger than even that of Cheops. For this being the highest point of all the country round, and lying moreover in a clearing of the tropical forest, it naturally was first to catch the rays of the morning sun; for which reason it had been held in high honour by the pious Aztecs as a favourite haunt of the sun-god, and this pyramid had been erected by them to his glory. To the said pyramid then the Indians retreated, when the Montezutepecans pressed hard upon them; and there they stood and shot, killing and being killed, while the Lieutenant without opposition invested the town, until out of an original number of some hundreds there remained alive considerably less than one hundred. Of this one hundred there subsequently died of their wounds a number which left but fifty-two survivors; and that the remnant were not killed in cold blood is to be accounted for only by the fact that the Montezutepecans were puzzled to know what to do with the corpses they had, and did not wish to add to their number. To confirm their decision the news arrived of the occupation of their town, from the other side, by the Lieutenant. In fact they found him so completely established that to all intents and purposes the town had ceased to be theirs; and having no sufficient weight of artillery to dislodge him, they adopted the best possible means of coming to terms by capturing and handing over to him their own ring-leaders, whom the Lieutenant immediately executed, and returned to Mexico city to report that justice had been done.

A year later, and the fifty-two survivors of the Indians who had rendered the Lieutenant, what his report speaks of as "some assistance" in the affair of Montezutepec, are still waiting till the *mañana* of his promises shall become the *hoy* of their fulfilment. They are Indians of a hardy and warlike tribe—able to make their waitings noticeable, wherefore the Governor sits in the *plaza* beneath the ornate cathedral of San Francisco and reads visions off his opal; and on the morrow—the *mañana* having for once and for this special object turned itself into a *hoy*—tailors are instructed to furnish at the cheapest possible cost, fifty-two suits of general-officers' uniform, to clothe the comparative nakedness of the Indian warriors in the neighbourhood of Montezutepec. In a year's time the last surviving Indian had been appointed a general-officer of the Mexican Army with authority to wear the uniform which a bountiful government supplied to him, to draw the pay (if he could get it), and take command of any that he could find to obey him.

Meanwhile the fifty-two generals sat in full uniform at the fifty-two doors of fifty-two palmetto-reed cabins under the mighty trees of the Mexican forests. Their wives and daughters sat around them, patting from hand to hand the *tortugas* for their meals. Their little brown children sprawled nakedly at their feet. The tame parrots sat on the branches of the ebony trees and wondered at them. The giant creepers stretched their great arms aloft and wove themselves intocable-strong lacery over the heads of the generals as over any others of the tribe. There was no difference between them and their neighbours, save perhaps that they drank more *pulquè* and misconducted themselves in rather more high-toned style. But this did not satisfy them. They wanted more than this. They had the effrontery to ask for their pay.

It was a warm summer, and the Governor had shifted his quarters

from the city to Chapultepec. He sat on the terrace of this favoured spot, the hill whence Montezuma was wont to gaze over the beloved city which, as the prophecies of the Fair God whispered to him, he was soon to lose. Here, like him, the Governor sat, caressing his blessed opal and gazing over the fair city when an American was brought into his presence with a letter of introduction from Señor Saloman Bensadi.

The American removed a high hat of astonishing glossiness in response to the Governor's bow, and presenting his letter of introduction, seated himself upon a chair which had been brought at the Governor's command. When the latter had finished the perusal of Señor Bensadi's note, he looked at the American for a full minute without speaking, and the glossy-hatted man bore the inspection with the blandest composure.

The American had the appearance of pictures of the apostles, though this of course does not apply to his dress, which was of sombre black finished off with elastic-side boots. His hair, however, was of apostolic length, falling upon his shoulders, and of venerable whiteness. His face was clean shaven save for a fringe which suggested a halo. Nevertheless, he was not an apostle, but a general—General Sheldrake. "Another general," the Governor commented, "that makes fifty-three."

"You have not adopted the native head-dress, the *sombrero*, I perceive," the Governor said, when he had done looking at him.

"No."

"They wear them very low this year; there is hardly room for the lace."

The subject of *sombreros* seemed without fascination for the visitor. He did not answer. The Governor did not pursue the topic.

"You are interested in railways, my friend, Señor Bensadi writes me."

At length the apostolic visitor spoke. But before he did so, he

solemnly stretched forth his hand, as though to take under its benediction the whole valley of Tenochtitlan.

"Your Excellency," he said, savouring the words as though they tasted well in his mouth, "your Excellency, here you have a great country, a noble, a fair country—the fair roofs and domes, and minarets of Mexico—the Venice of the Aztecs——"

"You have read Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico?*" the Governor interrupted him to ask.

The visitor bowed.

"So have I," said the Governor. "We might take your description from that, and go on." He spoke bad American. The visitor did not fully understand him.

"Yonder looms the great white cone of Iztaccihuatl, 'the white woman,' looking towards her lord and master, Popocatapetl, 'the mountain that smokes'——"

"Do you smoke?"

The American shook his head, but the Governor nevertheless lighted a cigar. The visitor paused and watched the smoke begin to curl round the Governor's moustaches. "But," he then went on, in a different tone, at length allowing his hand to assume a more natural position, "but you have no railways—I would not say none, nay, but hardly any. That inestimable blessing, however," he said, rising proudly, and tapping himself upon the breast-pocket of his frock coat, "that inestimable blessing I am able to give you."

The Governor understood him sufficiently well to draw out the magic opal and become absorbed in its depths. When the General had spoken for some five minutes more to the same purpose, his Excellency began to speak likewise. The American listened respectfully, and the Governor read the vision: "I see dreadful things happening—things that require my presence within the house. You will forgive me, I know, when I say good-bye."

"What a magnificent opal," the American observed. "My friend,

Señor Bensadi, has some very fine ones."

"This one has been blessed," the Governor said gravely, as if rebuking the implied comparison. "Pray inspect the palace, the grounds, the giant cypresses," he continued, courteously. "You may see traces of the bath which Montezuma carved out of the living rock, and Aztec hieroglyphs. You may also find crowns of hats without the brim, brims of hats without the crown, old preserved meat cans and old boots, all bearing signs of a high antiquity, but clearly belonging to a later civilization than the Aztec. There is also a well-preserved aqueduct. Good-bye."

"A singular man," the American reflected, as he drove back, past the statues of the Montezumas, and re-entered, by way of the Alameda, the city of Mexico. "But," he mentally added, as he alighted in the courtyard of the Iturbide Hotel, "I am not much nearer getting a concession for a railroad."

When the Governor went into his study the Lieutenant was there writing.

"There is another general," he said; "an American this time."

The Lieutenant did not answer, but ceased writing in order to listen with attention to the words of his superior.

"There are too many generals in Mexico," the latter went on.

Still the Lieutenant did not answer. Perhaps he was thinking that the Governor's remark boded ill for his own chances.

It seemed that the other's thought had forecasted the possibility of this reflection, for his next words were:—"Unless we remove a few, promotion in the higher ranks seems at a standstill. Listen," he continued, fiercely, as if the Lieutenant had been constantly interrupting him. "While yonder American was speaking of childish things, I read a vision in my opal." He went to the window and paused a moment, looking out on the infantry and field-guns in the

courtyard of the palace, on the mounted sentries here and there visible among the great cypress trees at the foot of the rock on which the palace was built. Then he looked over the tree-tops away to the white city, and then began speaking in a dreamy voice—"I saw a banquet, there were above a hundred guests, one hundred and four to be precise. One half of these were in the uniform of general officers, but their hue was swarthy. They sat alternately with soldiers of common rank, but of fairer face. And the banquet went merrily until the dessert—then all was confusion. Can you interpret the vision?"

The Lieutenant laughed a low appreciative chuckle. "It is a funny opal," he said. "I will start *mañana* (to-morrow)."

A fortnight later the hearts of the fifty-two generals at the fifty-two doors of the palmetto-reed huts were cheered to receive an invitation from the Governor's Lieutenant to a great banquet in the neighbourhood of Montezutepec. "It was the intention of the Government," the invitation said, "in recognition of their noble patience in awaiting the arrears of pay, which had unaccountably miscarried, to show its appreciation by requiring them in such full manner that they should never hereafter utter a word of complaint against its generosity. To inaugurate this great consummation the Lieutenant on behalf of the Government had the highest pleasure in inviting them one and all to a banquet, at the conclusion of which they should receive full quittance." There was great rejoicing in the palmetto-reed huts, and the parrots chattered more volubly, and the women patted the *tortyas* more vigorously, and the generals quaffed the *pulquè* more voluptuously—in order to get themselves into training for the banquet on the morrow.

And on the morrow they fared to the feast, and each Indian general was seated beside a Spanish-Mexican private soldier, and took no offence, because

of the prospect of the banquet and of the receipt of pay. They feasted gloriously, and in heads unaccustomed to anything but *pulquè*, the *aguadiente* of the white man wrought strange visions, until at a certain stage of the dessert the Lieutenant gave the word for rendering to the generals their quittance in full, whereupon each white man turned to his swarthy neighbour on the left-hand side, and saying with Spanish courtesy, "Will you take some cheese?" drove his dagger home into the Indian's heart. And for the fifty-two Indian generals, alone in all Mexico, there was no *mañana*.

In a few days the Governor received from the Lieutenant a report of an attempted insurrection which had taken place amongst the Indians near Montezutepet, but had been promptly put down by the punishment of fifty-two of the ringleaders. "He is a faithful servant," the Governor said, with a gentle sigh of relief. "So much for the fifty-two generals. Now I can give my attention to the fifty-third."

During these days the American had not ceased to call upon the Governor at such short intervals as he deemed prudent, to renew his solicitations about the concession of the railroad. The Governor, however, had invariably spoken the fatal word *mañana*, and the American general began to fear that the *mañana* would never translate itself into *hoy*. On the return of the Lieutenant from paying off their arrears to the fifty-two Indians near Montezutepet, there were walking under the palms of the Alameda, the Governor, the Lieutenant, General Sheldrake, and Señor Salomon Bensadi. They had been watching with interest the bright birds in the open air aviary, and the deer in the enclosure, when the American reverted to the subject of his visit.

"I should like to tell you," Señor Bensadi was saying, "a story of a nest of mocking birds which—"

"Speaking about railroads," the American interrupted, turning to the

Governor. But he in his turn was interrupted—

"Speaking about railroads," the Governor echoed. "I should like to tell you the story of the American railroads. Let us sit down."

They sat on benches in the shade. Workpeople in *poncho* or *serape* sauntered past them; on the carriage road before the houses an occasional hidalgo, seated very erect on his unshod horse, ambled noiselessly over the *mesquite* pavement to the city. Farther away the noise of the carriages was indistinctly heard.

"George Washington," said the Governor, drawing the blessed opal from his pocket and reverently gazing into its depths, "was the father of his people and George Washington could not tell a lie. We know that it was true because he told us so himself, and he was a man who could not tell a lie."

"That was when he was quite a little boy," General Sheldrake observed. "He grew more intelligent afterwards."

"Epimenides the Cretan said that all Cretans were liars," Señor Bensadi interposed.

"I do not see that that has anything to do with George Washington," the Governor replied. "One of your finest writers has said, 'I know he was a gentleman for he told me so himself, and he would not tell a lie about a little matter like that.' Of course this was not with any reference to George Washington, but it illustrates my position. But what I was going to say was that though he was the father of his people he does not seem to have transmitted his incapacity to his children. Perhaps it will reappear in the next generation. Have you any remarks to make upon the tendency of hereditary traits to skip a generation?" he inquired of the Lieutenant.

"No; none."

"There has been more than one generation since the time of George Washington," Señor Bensadi suggested.

"Ah, true," said the Governor, "then we will leave George Washington; but the story, as I read it, is this. It occurred to certain gentlemen living in a town, which we may leave in its obscurity on the Pacific, that it would be a good thing for the town to promote a railroad to run from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast. Their motives were purely philanthropic—for they said so themselves, and again they would not have told a lie about a little matter like that. So they approached the State Legislature, with which they had influence, and said, 'We regard it in the light of a public duty to do all that in us lies towards the building of a railroad from the Atlantic to the Pacific—the advantages of commerce, and so forth.' We need not follow out all the reasons which these philanthropic men adduced for their philanthropy."

"Certainly not," the Lieutenant interposed.

"Therefore," the philanthropists continued, "we ask only that you should give us so much per mile for the construction of the railroad, as well as every alternate section along the line of the railroad (a section I need hardly tell you is 640 acres), 'and we, in return, will undertake to build you this road.' Well, the Legislature agreed to the proposal. The 'so much' per mile for which the philanthropists had bargained turned out to be about twice as much per mile as the construction of the railroad cost. The alternate sections turned out to be of enormous value, with the railroad running through them. Thus the country was opened for Eastern capital, the philanthropists became men of such wealth that the name of millionaire failed to designate them, and thus we see that philanthropy never fails of its due reward." The Governor paused, but in such a way that all his hearers knew that there was more to follow. Seeing their silently expectant attitudes he continued: "It is one of the character-

istics of this virtue that it constantly extends its sphere. The philanthropists did not feel that they had done enough. Having built this road by the aid of the State, and having profitably sold its bonds, they found themselves in possession of sufficient capital to build a railroad upon their own account. This road was in direct opposition to the previously built railroad, and they were thus enabled to supply the public with the blessings of a competitive system of railroads from the Atlantic to the Pacific—in which philanthropic enterprise it was found, as before, that philanthropic virtue was not its own (and its only) reward."

This time he ceased in such a manner as to indicate that he had reached the conclusion of his narrative. There was a momentary pause. Then the American said: "Excuse me, but in what way has this a bearing upon the proposal that I have brought before you?"

"Merely as showing," replied the Governor, replacing the opal in his pocket, "that railroads are not always built purely in the interests of the travelling or trading public."

"Would you be kind enough," the American asked, "to lend me your opal for a few minutes? I am curious to see whether I could read a vision off it."

After a moment's reflection the Governor rather reluctantly drew the stone from his pocket and handed it to General Sheldrake.

The American gazed awhile into the translucency of the blessed gem. "I read from it," he said at length, "a vision which we may call 'The Story of the Man who knew his Price.' A certain man was commissioned by the government of a certain state to travel around and report upon the working of the licensing laws. He was an honest man—"

"Was he a friend of yours?" the Governor asked, but General Sheldrake paid no attention to the question.

"He was an honest man, and when

he had been absent a week or two he wrote to the Board by whom he had been commissioned as follows: 'On my arrival at the town of A—— I was offered ten thousand dollars to frame my report in accordance with the wishes of those who would have bought me. At the town of B—— I was offered twenty thousand dollars. At C—— I was offered thirty thousand dollars; at D—— forty thousand; at E—— fifty thousand. On each of these cities I now beg to hand you my report, and at the same time I would ask you to recall me, and to send some one else to report upon the other cities of the state, *for they have nearly reached my price.*'"

"From which we are to infer?"—the Governor said interrogatively, as the American thus concluded his story.

"That every man has his price," the latter answered, looking into the Governor's eagle-eyes as he handed him back the opal.

"Yes," the Governor replied, returning his gaze with interest. "Every man has his price. But some men's price is hard to reach."

After this, General Sheldrake bought a tract of land very cheap, yet at a price which Señor Bensadi laughed at him about, for it was in the alkali desert and would grow nothing—so at least Señor Bensadi maintained, but General Sheldrake said it was an oasis in the desert, and that he would make his money off it, with interest. So he built a house and lived there, and occasionally came into the city to see Señor Bensadi, or to try to persuade the Governor to his own views about the railroad.

Now it was the Governor's habit to drive out, some three or four days in the week, generally with his Lieutenant, and the most favourite of his drives was to that tree of sad memories, the *triste noche* tree, under whose shade the indomitable Cortes is reported to have wept on the night of his expulsion from the city of the Montezumas. And on one occasion of these drives the Governor passed near

the house of General Sheldrake, and he bade the coachman pull up, and smiled at what he saw being done there, for there was great activity, and mules were coming and going from the river-bed, bringing loam and putting it into pits dug here and there in the alkali ground. And the Governor looked thoughtfully into his opal and for the first time began to ask himself whether the American were more knave or fool; for if this were knavery it was hard to see to what end it tended.

In a few months the patch bought by General Sheldrake in the desert was green with pumpkin vines, which grow, when they grow at all, so fast that one can all but see them doing it. It was, as he had told Señor Bensadi, an oasis in the desert, and he asked Señor Bensadi to come out and stay with him, and the man from the city was exceedingly surprised by what he saw. "Really," he said, "I had no idea that this alkali land could be made so fertile."

But the other said, Yes; that he had had a great deal of experience of alkali (as indeed he should, for he was raised in Arizona), and that he had often noticed that where there was a patch of fair land, with alkali about, that patch was extraordinarily fertile. "It seems," he said, "as if that patch had, as it were, sapped the fertile qualities of all the surrounding land, and concentrated them in itself."

And Señor Bensadi said, "Oh yes," though for all he understood of it he might equally well have answered "Oh no," and that was the end of it.

In a few months more General Sheldrake started from his ranche as the dawn was bathing in rosy light the snowy heads of Popocatapetl and his spouse. He rode thoughtfully through the cactus and the *mesquite* bush, and arrived in the city before the sun was hot. He came into the stifling little store where Señor Bensadi sat among his opals, his feather-work, his broderies, his Mexican silver-work, and all his antiques. He declined a glass

of vermouth which his friend thoughtfully offered him ; his normal volatility had deserted him, he seemed like a man with whom the world was going amiss. He despaired of getting his concession for the railroad.

Señor Bensadi discussed commerce and art. "Things are going well with us," he said. "Jewels are coming in well, and going out well. Above all, we have made many improvements during the last year or two in the manufacture of antiques."

"You have some fine opals," the American said, looking round him, "but none quite so fine as the Governor's."

"Ah," the Señor answered, with a glance of doubtful significance. "His, you see, has been blessed."

"Hum!" said the American, equally doubtfully. "Now what is the meaning of this visioning and sight-seeing in this blessed opal, anyway?"

"Well," Señor Bensadi said, "no question has been more discussed in Mexico than that which you have just asked me. How much does the Governor see, or does he believe he sees, and how much does he only make-believe to see? He is a pious man, my friend, as we all are, and most undoubtedly he had this opal blessed, and values it sacredly. And in the East there have always been traditions of the miraculous visions in the depths of the opal—for those who have eyes to see. But there are also many in Mexico—Sadducees and sceptics—who declare that it is all a make-believe of the Governor's. That instead of giving a direct command, which might involve responsibility, he does but read off some fairy tale or parable which that Lieutenant (who understands him as if he were his familiar spirit) interprets and executes. That is what some say. I do not know which say the truth. For me, I say nothing."

"Hum!" said the American again. "But tell me—you surely do not believe at all in this miraculous power that they attribute to the opal?"

"They are funny things, my friend,

these opals," he answered, a little uneasily. "They make funny eyes at night, when you come into this store" (he was whispering) "with the moonlight playing on to them. It would take a bold burglar to rob this store, I think. But some of them are not the real opal—there are shrikes and there are mocking-birds."

"How do you say?"

"I mean there are opals and there are onyxes. All that pass for opals are not opals at all."

"Then what are you talking about mocking-birds?"

"Ah, my friend, did I not tell you that story? I call it the Story of the Nest of Mocking-birds. It is written on the saddest page of my life's history. They are beautiful birds, mocking-birds, are they not? And such a lovely note, so rich, so full! Such a power as they have, too, of weaving into their own wonderful song each sound they hear—a horse neighing, a baby crying—no matter how homely the sound they fill it full of melody, while they preserve the imitation and make it fit into their own harmony. I am a great lover of birds. It has been my dream to go back some time to my native country, there to hear the skylark sing, the bird of Burns, of Wordsworth. I, as I need hardly say, am a Scotsman."

"A what?" the General asked, astonished.

"A Scotsman, of course," Señor Bensadi said, with mutual astonishment at the other's surprise. "I need scarcely remind you of those famous names Ben More, Ben Nevis, or Ben Lomond, to show you how common a prefix is that which my own name bears. My ancestors used to roam the Highlands——"

"Of Mount Sinai."

"I beg your pardon?"

"I did not speak," said the General. "At least it was nothing important."

"To return to our mocking-birds," the Scotsman resumed. "I was in love—deeply, devotedly in love—for, as a compatriot has said to me, 'When a

Scotsman loves, he loves to distraction ; and when a Scotsman drinks, he drinks to desperation.' But I will spare you my distractions. I loved her. I spoke to her often—in fervent words—of the song of the mocking-bird. She was a Chicago girl. Yes," he went on hurriedly and fiercely, catching the other's eye, "her feet *were* large, but I loved every inch of them. I believe I often tried, by humming, to give her some idea of the mocking-bird's song ; but she said that even so she could scarcely realise it. Then it occurred to me—oh, brilliant conception—to send her a nest of young mocking-birds. I found the nest myself. Ah ! that was the mistake I made in the excess of my ardour. I should have let some one else find it for me. But I sent them to her, by special messenger, and had the happiness of hearing that they had arrived safely and that they were doing well. By degrees her letters grew colder. Some one had inspired her perchance, I thought, with suspicions to my disadvantage. The references to the 'dear little mocking-birds' grew less frequent ; but at length I got a letter which was full of mocking-birds. (I speak metaphorically, you will understand.) She said the birds would not sing, and would eat nothing but raw meat. I wrote back and said it was not the season for their singing, and that the change of climate would naturally make them want strong nourishing food. But I grew madly uneasy. I could bear it no longer, and at last I rushed to Chicago. Imagine my feelings, my friend, my suspicions were all too fully realised. They were there in full blatant health, accursed destroyers of my happiness, with hooked beaks, eating meat like cannibals—my beautiful mocking-birds were simply unmitigated shrikes ! "

"And the sequel ?" General Sheldrake asked, as the other paused.

"The sequel !" he said, in painful gasps. "The sequel is, that I remain a bachelor."

"I see," said the General, "you

are a shrike, instead of a mocking-bird."

Señor Bensadi smiled in mournful appreciation of his friend's humour. "Yes," he added, "an onyx instead of an opal."

"By the by," General Sheldrake said, "in my sympathy for you I was nearly forgetting the object of my visit. I have discovered," he continued, drawing within confidential whisper range, "I have discovered another oasis. It is within three leagues of that one which you saw smiling like a garden. Unhappily I have not the money to buy or open it up. But it is a tract of unexampled fertility. I have so great confidence in it that if you will advance me the money on mortgage of that property, which you have already seen, I will willingly pay you fifteen per cent."

"Certainly, my friend, certainly. The interest is fair, and the security is good, for I have seen it with my eyes ; it remains to consider at what rate we should value the property."

And the business between them was concluded in fewer hours than a Mexican would have needed *mañanas*.

The Governor and his Lieutenant were sitting, a few *mañanas* after this, on the seat beneath the old cathedral, with the perfume of the violets in the flower-market wafted to them and the humming-birds poising themselves over the palm trees, just as they were seated when the Governor read from his opal the first vision of the fifty-two generals. The Governor was talking and the Lieutenant was listening in absent-minded obedience when a *sombrero* came to a halt before them and was perceived to shade the dark features and some of the portly person of Señor Saloman Bensadi. The Señor expressed his gratification at seeing the Governor in such good health, and observed that all things indicated that their friend in common, General Sheldrake, proposed to make Mexico for a while his home.

"Indeed," said the Governor. "May

one ask on what you base that inference?"

"On the fact that I have recently furnished him on friendly terms with a sum of money for the purchase of some more land."

"Indeed," the Governor replied again. "Now I should have inferred, on the contrary, that the fact of owing money in a certain city would rather have the tendency to make the borrower desire to leave that city. But doubtless you know your friend, beyond question, a man of the highest honour."

"I said friendly terms, your Excellency; but that was not to say without security. Oh no! That eligible and fertile garden which the General has planted—"

"In the alkali desert?"

"Precisely; but his oasis flourishes like a bay tree—"

"Pardon my interrupting you," said the Governor, who for the last few seconds had been questioning the profundities of the blessed opal. "With your kind permission I would like to expound to you a vision that I see here, and which I may call the Story of the Pumpkin Vines. I see a man of apostolic countenance directing certain agricultural operations in the alkali desert. I see mules coming from the river bank bearing loads of loamy earth, which are discharged into large holes dug in the alkali ground. Again, and I see a planting of seeds in the holes so prepared among the alkali. Again, and I see the spreading limbs of the pumpkin vines, and behold they have covered all the alkali ground, and the apostolic man's patch smiles like a verdant garden. Again, and I see the apostolic man displaying his work proudly to a *sombreroed*, dark-visaged man of fine full habit. Again, and I see the dark-visaged man of full habit handing money to the apostolic man and receiving in exchange a legal

document. Again, and I see the apostolic man leaving his house and garden. His house is stripped bare. The pumpkin vines have withered down, and the ground is again bare alkali. He is leaving with all his household goods. Again, and I see the dark-visaged man in fury—but no, that is enough."

"Great heaven!" exclaimed Señor Bensadi. "Do you mean to say you think the General would have left me—would have deceived me—left me to foreclose on worthless land?"

"The General!" the Governor echoed, with every accent of surprise. "What general? Did I mention a general?" he asked, turning to the Lieutenant.

"Not that I am aware of."

"Understand, sir," the Governor continued, turning with fury to Señor Saloman Bensadi, "I made reference to no general. I did but favour you with a reading of a vision from my sacred opal. I will wish you good morning."

Señor Saloman Bensadi was a very sad Scotsman as he stood, on the *mañana*, in the alkali desert surveying a few withered stems of pumpkin vines and a dismantled wooden house, the late residence of General Sheldrake, who, as inquiries in the city had shown him, had been recalled by urgent business to America on the previous day. The Señor left his buggy and hammered at the door of the wooden house, with no avail. None answered. With a bar of the snake fence which had inclosed the once verdant pumpkin patch he broke the poor lock. The room was as bare as the desert. It was not even relieved by cactus or *mesquite* scrub. Only behind the door was pinned a sheet of paper headed "To Señor Saloman Bensadi," and, underneath the legend, "Is it mocking-birds or shrikes?"

HORACE HUTCHINSON.

EXTRACTS FROM SOME UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF
CHARLOTTE BRONTË.

II.

WHILE picturing to ourselves the unvarying and monotonous existence led by the inmates of Haworth Parsonage, we can easily conceive how stirring must have been the contrast when Charlotte Brontë's connection with the literary world began at last to make itself evident. Her cherished desire to remain unknown was to be overruled. Rumours as to her sex began to circulate and gain ground; and, though sooner or later such surmises were inevitable, they caused her considerable annoyance and vexation. She knew well enough, and felt keenly, that in the minds of many good people of that day the mere knowledge that the author was a woman would be sufficient to give her writings a significance (or rather an insignificance) quite apart from their intrinsic merits. Currer Bell, the author, and Charlotte Brontë, the country parson's daughter, were in her mind two distinct individuals, and had nothing in common. The latter's skill as a housewife, the excellence of her jams and pickles, concerned the home circle alone; she claimed a judgment equally fair and unbiased for the achievements of Currer Bell, the writer. Great therefore was her dismay when her attention was called to a criticism on *Shirley*, which appeared in one of the leading reviews, and which she afterwards discovered to have been written by Mr. G. H. Lewes. This article, though highly laudatory, contained throughout constant and mortifying allusions to the sex of the author, and Miss Brontë bitterly resented the injustice of allowing the personality of the writer to identify itself with the book.

To criticism the keenest and the

most searching, to censure even, she never showed herself averse when offered in a fair spirit, indeed, it may be said rather that she courted it, regarding it in the light of a wholesome and necessary tonic. Take as an example a sentence like the following :

You do very rightly and kindly to tell me the objections made against *Jane Eyre*; they are more essential than the praises. I feel a sort of heartache when I hear the book called "Godless" and "pernicious" by good and earnest-minded men; but I know that heartache will be salutary—at least I trust so.

And again I repeatedly find remarks of which the following half-playful protest is a sample :

I glanced over the list of notices you sent, and I see much tact has been exercised in the selection. Shall I tell you what you have done? You have just culled the best sentences in each review as if you had been gathering flowers in a *parterre*, rejecting what was superfluous and unsightly like weeds: you have made them up into pretty little bouquets of praise. I do not care for the sight or scent of them, but call them artificial. The censure and condemnation were probably equally well founded. I shall ever intreat my *first critic* to be as impartial as he is friendly: what he feels to be out of taste in my writings I hope he will unspareingly condemn. In the excitement of composition one is apt to fall into errors that one regrets afterwards.

Some of Miss Brontë's views regarding G. H. Lewes and his works are here transcribed; and it must be borne in mind that her opinions were not in any way influenced by his criticisms of her works—criticisms of which the one alluded to above was by no means the first. Many were written long before Lewes had any

suspicion that the name of Currer Bell was merely the screen behind which the retiring Yorkshire girl sought to hide herself, and of Currer Bell his praise would appear to have been unstinted. He seems indeed to have praised her far more highly than she conceived herself to deserve.

The first time her attention is called to him is indicated in the subjoined letter :

I shall be obliged to you if you will direct the enclosed to be posted in London, as I wish to avoid giving any clue to my place of residence, publicity not being my ambition. It is in answer to the letter received yesterday favoured by you. This letter bore the signature G. H. Lewes, and the writer informed me it is his intention to write a critique on *Jane Eyre* for the December number of *Frazer's Magazine*. Can you give me any information respecting Mr. G. H. Lewes? What station he occupies in the literary world, and what works he has written? He styles himself "a fellow novelist": there is something in the candid tone of his letter which inclines me to think well of him.

In referring again to this proposed critique, which duly appeared in *Frazer's Magazine*, she says :

Mr. Lewes is very lenient. I anticipated a degree of severity which he has spared me. This notice differs from all the other notices. He must be a man of no ordinary mind; there is a strange sagacity evinced in some of his remarks—yet he is not always right. I am afraid if he knew how much I write from intuition, how little from actual knowledge, he would think me presumptuous ever to have written at all. I am sure such would be his opinion if he knew the narrow bounds of my attainments, the limited scope of my reading.

Afterwards, in her turn, she criticises the first of Mr. Lewes' books she has ever read; not in the pages of a public journal, be it remembered, but in pleasant interchange of literary gossip, her remarks being intended for one friendly ear alone.

It would be useless to attempt opposition to your opinions since, in fact, to read them was to recognise almost point for

point a clear definition of objections I had already felt, but had found neither the power nor the will to express. Not the power, because I find it difficult to analyse closely, or to criticise in appropriate words—and not the will, because I was afraid of doing Mr. Lewes an injustice. I preferred over-rating to under-rating the merits of his work. Mr. Lewes' sincerity, energy, and talent assuredly command the reader's respect, but on what points he depends to win his attachment I know not. I do not think he cares to excite the pleasant feelings which incline the taught to the teacher as much in friendship as in reverence. The display of his acquirements, to which almost every page bears testimony—citations from Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, French, and German authors, covering as with embroidery the texture of his English, awes and astonishes the plain reader; but if, in addition, you permit yourself to require the refining charm of delicacy, the elevating one of imagination; if you permit yourself to be as fastidious and exacting in these matters as, by your own confession, it appears *you* are, then Mr. Lewes must necessarily inform you that he does not deal in the article; probably he will add that *therefore* it must be non-essential. I should fear he might even stigmatise imagination as a figment, and delicacy as an affectation. An honest, rough heartiness Mr. Lewes will give you; yet in case you had the misfortune to remark that the heartiness might be quite as honest if it were less rough, would you not run the risk of being termed a sentimental and a dreamer? Were I privileged to address Mr. Lewes—were it wise or becoming to say exactly what one thinks, I should utter words to this effect: You have a sound clear judgment as far as it goes, but I conceive it to be limited. Your standard of talent is high, but I cannot acknowledge it to be the highest; you are deserving of all attention when you lay down the law on principles, but you are to be resisted when you dogmatise on feelings. To a certain point you can go, Mr. Lewes, but no farther. Be as sceptical as you please on whatever lies beyond a certain intellectual limit; the mystery will never be cleared up to you, for that limit you will never over-pass. Not all your learning, not all your reading, not all your sagacity, not all your perseverance can help you over one viewless line; one boundary as impassable as it is invisible. To enter that sphere a man must be born within it; and untaught peasants have

there drawn their first breath, while learned philosophers have striven hard till old age to reach it, and have never succeeded. I should not dare, nor would it be right to say this to Mr. Lewes, but I cannot help thinking it, both of him and of many others who have a great name in the world.

A few more observations on Mr. Lewes are taken from a letter dated February, 1850. She has been dwelling on her late visit to London and speaks with enthusiasm of the numerous people she has met there, commenting on the characters and peculiarities of those who have most impressed her. Then she refers briefly to one of Lewes' books and adds :

Lewes is a strange being. I always regret that I did not see him in London. He seems to me to be clever, sharp, and coarse ; I used to think him sagacious, but I believe now he is no more than shrewd. But though he has many smart and deserving points about him, he has nothing truly great, and nothing truly great, I should think, will he ever produce. Yet he merits just such successes as the one you describe—triumphs public, brief and noisy. Notoriety suits Lewes. Fame—were it possible that he could achieve her, would be a thing uncongenial to him ; he could not wait for the solemn blast of her trumpet, sounding long, and slowly waxing louder.

Soon after writing this she meets Mr. Lewes in the flesh, and is unexpectedly unnerved and moved by his singular and startling resemblance in feature and expression to her beloved and lost sister Emily. This curious coincidence evidently impresses her greatly ; she even speaks of tears which rose unbidden, and more than once threatened to upset her composure during the time she remained in his company. Henceforth I find in her letters no mention of Mr. Lewes beyond an occasional allusion to his name.

The depth of her affection for Emily it would be impossible to over-estimate. To quote her own words, she was "the one thing nearest to her on earth." The grief she experienced at her loss

was appalling in its intensity, and of a very different nature to that which shook her being when she stood by Branwell's dying bed. For Branwell, bitter, agonised regret for the wasted past, for hopes defeated and yearnings unsatisfied, was her prominent feeling. The following letter is pitiful in its hopelessness.

We have buried our dead out of our sight. A lull begins to succeed the gloomy tumult of last week. It is not permitted us to grieve for him who is gone as others grieve for those they love ; the removal of our only brother must necessarily be regarded by us rather in the light of a mercy than a chastisement. Branwell was his father's and his sisters' pride and hope in boyhood ; but since manhood the case has been otherwise. It has been our lot to see him take a wrong bent ; to hope, expect, await his return to the right path ; to know the sickness of hope deferred, the dismay of prayer baffled ; to experience despair at last, and now to behold the sudden, early, obscure close of what might have been a noble career. I do not weep from a sense of bereavement—there is no prop withdrawn, no consolation torn away, no dear companion lost—but for the wreck of talent, the ruin of promise, the untimely, dreary extinction of what might have been a burning and a shining light. My brother was a year my junior ; I had aspirations and ambitions for him once long ago. They have perished mournfully—nothing remains of him but a memory of errors and sufferings. There is such a bitterness of pity for his life and death, such a yearning for the emptiness of his whole existence as I cannot describe. I trust time will allay these feelings. When I looked on the noble face and forehead of my dead brother (Nature had favoured him with a fairer outside, as well as a finer constitution than his sisters) and asked myself what had made him go ever wrong, tend ever downwards when he had so many gifts to induce to, and aid in an upward course, I seemed to receive an oppressive revelation of the feebleness of humanity ; of the inadequacy of even genius to lead to true greatness if unaided by religion and principle. My poor father naturally thought more of his *only son* than of his daughters, and much and long as he had suffered on his account, he cried out for his loss as David did for Absalom, "*My son! My son!*" and refused to be comforted. And then when I ought to have

been able to collect my strength, and to be at hand to support him, I fell ill with an illness whose approaches I had felt for some time previously, and of which the crisis was hastened by the care and trouble of the death-scene, the first I had ever witnessed. The past has seemed to me a strange week. Thank God, for my father's sake, I am better now though still feeble. My unhappy brother never knew what his sisters had done in literature—he was not aware that they had ever published a line; we could not tell him of our efforts for fear of causing him too deep a pang of remorse for his own time mis-spent and talents mis-applied. Now he will *never* know.

I thank you for your kind sympathy, and pray earnestly that your sons may all do well, and that you may be spared the sufferings my father has gone through.

The story of Branwell Brontë, his wasted and depraved life and his miserable heathen death, has been enlarged upon by Charlotte's admirers with a free hand. Had not the record of his sad fate been bandied about from mouth to mouth, accompanied by every form of censure and of exaggeration, the foregoing letter would never have appeared in print. In the circumstances, however, it is as well that Charlotte's voice should be heard among the rest. Speaking from the heart in the hour of trouble, and evidently with no intention to gloss over her brother's shortcomings, she laments his fate more, I think it will be admitted, from a negative point of view, that the early bud of promise should have been perverted and blighted instead of blossoming into what might have been so fair a perfection. She does not condone, nor does she, I think, altogether hold him up in the light of a monster. One is glad, moreover, to note one point in her letter. Branwell has been accused by more than one writer of a shameful attempt to defraud his sister Emily of her well-deserved literary fame. It has been said that while *Wuthering Heights* was attracting public attention he was in the habit of insinuating, indeed on occasions of openly asserting, that he and not Emily was its author. Char-

lotte's sorrowful words point to the falsity of such an accusation. "He never knew what his sisters had done in literature, he was not aware that they had ever published a line." Let us in charity hope that among the many sins with which his memory is charged, there may be others with no better foundation than this appears to have. The love of contrast is strong in human nature. It may be that a comparison of the honourable, austere lives of the three sisters with that of the faulty and erring brother has proved too strong a temptation for the dramatic instincts of some of those who have touched upon their pathetic story.

It seems difficult to realise the qualities that Charlotte discerned in Emily's curious nature which rendered her the object of such passionate devotion—a devotion which was apparently something quite apart from the natural sisterly affection she felt for Anne. Even her own version of Emily's peculiarities strike one as anything but prepossessing. "Emily," she writes, "has a strong original mind full of strange though sombre power; when she writes it breaks forth in scenes which shock more than they attract." I fancy this is not far short of the world's verdict respecting Emily's unpleasant but powerful work.

There is in truth something "sombre," and, to speak plainly, repellent, about all one can glean of Emily Brontë.

I would fain hope [says the patient loving sister in reporting her health] that Emily is a little better this evening, but it is difficult to ascertain this; she is a real stoic in illness; she neither seeks, nor will accept sympathy. To put any question, to offer any aid, is to annoy. She will not yield a step before pain and sickness till forced; not one of her ordinary avocations will she voluntarily renounce. You must look on and see her do what she is unfit to do, and not dare to say a word—a painful necessity for those to whom her health and existence are as precious as the life in their veins. When she is ill there seems to be no sunshine in the world for me. I think a certain

harshness in her powerful and peculiar nature only makes me cling to her the more.

And so the painful record continues. Emily, in the face of her sister's terrible distress and sickening anxiety, which one would think must be only too apparent, "would not see the most skilful physician in England if he were brought to her, nor would she follow his prescriptions; no reasoning nor entreaty would avail to induce her to do so." It is to be hoped that the selfishness, or rather the cruelty of such unreasonable behaviour did not force itself upon the minds of the luckless pair on whom was thus thrust the terrible responsibility of watching their sister die by inches, as it were, without having it in their power to raise a finger to help her. To cause such needless suffering to hearts brimming over with tenderness and solicitude will certainly appear anything but attractive to others.

But the end was at hand; neither physician nor medicine was needed more; the last agonies were proudly endured to the end, and Emily Jane Brontë died in the arms of those who loved her.

Emily is nowhere here now. Her wasted mortal remains are taken out of the house; we have laid her cherished head under the church aisle beside my mother, my two sisters, dead long ago, and my poor hapless brother. But a small remnant of the race is left, so my poor father thinks. Her fever is quieted, her restlessness soothed, her deep hollow cough is hushed for ever. We have not the conflict of the strangely strong spirit in the fragile frame before us—relentless conflict once seen, never to be forgotten. A dreary calm reigns around us in the midst of which we seek resignation. My father and my sister Anne are far from well. As to me, God has hitherto most graciously sustained me; so far I have felt adequate to bear my own burden, and even to offer a little help to others. I am not ill; I can get through my daily duties, and do something towards keeping hope and energy alive in our mourning household. My father says to me almost hourly, "Charlotte, you must bear up. I shall

sink if you fail me." These words you can conceive are a stimulus to nature. The sight, too, of my sister Anne's very still, but deep sorrow, wakens in me such fear for her that I dare not falter; *somebody* must cheer the rest. So I will not now ask why Emily was torn from us in the fulness of our attachment, rooted up in the prime of her own days, in the promise of her powers—why her existence now lies like a field of green corn trodden down—like a tree in full bearing struck at the root? I will only say, sweet is rest after labour, and calm after tempest, and repeat again and again that Emily knows that now.

There can be no doubt that Emily was doomed by inheritance and constitutional delicacy to a premature grave; but that her death was hastened by her own obstinacy in refusing every remedy or alleviation, is equally certain.

Not unlikely is it also, that Anne's health was considerably shaken and impaired by the cruel strain of mind and body she, as well as Charlotte, must have undergone. The latter speaks more than once in her letters during this period of Anne's state of health; of the wearing pains in the side, and the constant fits of depression; and when it is remembered that only five short months after Emily's death, Anne followed her to the grave, it seems only too probable that the sensitive and delicate younger sister was in no fit state to take her share of the painful duties which had devolved upon her. The endeavour to be a cheery nurse to so trying a patient must have been attended with considerable wear and tear of mind. "It is best," Charlotte writes, "to leave her to form her own judgment, and especially not to advocate the side you wish her to favour; if you do, she is sure to lean in the opposite direction, and ten to one will argue herself into non-compliance."

Almost immediately after Emily's removal, and before it was possible that Charlotte could have in any way rallied from the terrible blow, her fears for Anne began to take definite shape.

In less than a month we find her writing thus :

In sitting down to write to you I feel as if I were doing a wrong and selfish thing ; I believe I ought to discontinue my correspondence with you till times change, and the tide of calamity, which of late days has set so strongly against us, takes a turn. But the fact is, I feel it absolutely necessary to unburden my mind. To papa I must only speak cheerfully, to Anne only encouragingly. To you I may give some hint of the dreary truth. Anne and I sit alone and in seclusion as you fancy us, but we do not study. Anne cannot study now, she can scarcely read, she occupies Emily's chair. She does not get well. A week ago we sent for a medical man of skill and experience from Leeds ; his report I forbear to dwell on for the present, even skilful physicians have often been mistaken in their conjectures. When we lost Emily I thought we had drained the very dregs of our cup of trial, but now, when I hear Anne cough as Emily coughed, I tremble lest there should be exquisite bitterness yet to taste. I must not look forwards, nor must I look backwards ; too often I feel like one crossing an abyss on a narrow plank, a glance around might quite unnerve Anne. Anne is very patient in her illness, as patient as Emily was unflinching. I recall one sister and look at the other with a sort of reverence as well as affection—under the test of suffering neither has faltered. All the days of this winter have gone by like a funeral train. Since September sickness has not quitted the house ; it is strange, it did not use to be so ; but I suspect now all this has been coming on for years. Unused, any of us, to the possession of robust health, we have not noticed the gradual approaches of decay ; the little cough, the small appetite, the tendency to take cold at every variation of atmosphere, have been regarded as things of course. I see them in another light now. Write to me as you would to a person in an average state of tranquillity and happiness. I want to keep myself as firm and calm as I can ; while papa and Anne want me I hope and pray never to fail them, besides it will be less harassing to yourself to address me as usual.

After Anne's death she writes as follows :

No one need be anxious about me as far as I know. Friends seem to think *this*

the worst time of suffering. They are sorely mistaken. Anne's quiet Christian death did not rend my heart as Emily's stern, simple, undemonstrative end did. I let Anne go to God, and felt He had a right to her. I could hardly let Emily go ; I wanted to hold her back then, and I want her back hourly now. They are both gone, and so is poor Branwell, and papa has only me now—the weakest, puniest, least promising of his six children. Consumption has taken the whole five. No letters will find me at Scarborough after the 7th. I cannot rest here, but neither can I go home.

It is indeed a mournful picture. Small wonder that she feels a reluctance to return to her desolate home, to the first aspect of the empty rooms once tenanted by those dearest to her heart, and where the shadow of their last days must for ever linger. She speaks afterwards in touching language of that return, which duty and her care for her sorrowing father, would not allow her to postpone for long.

I call it "home" still, much as London would be London if an earthquake should shake its streets to ruins. But let me not be ungrateful. Papa is here, and two most affectionate and faithful servants—Emily's large house dog and Anne's little spaniel. The ecstasy of these poor animals when I came in was something singular ; at former returns from brief absences they always welcomed me warmly, but not in that strange, heart-touching way. I am certain they thought that as I was returned my sisters were not far behind ; but Keeper may visit Emily's little bedroom, as he still does day by day, Flossy may look wistfully round for Anne—they will never see them again, nor shall I. I do not look for general pity and conventional condolence, I do not want either from man or woman. I have got used to your friendly sympathy and it comforts me. I have tried, and I trust the fidelity of one or two other friends and I lean on it. But labour must be my cure—not sympathy. Labour is the only radical cure for rooted sorrow.

Brave words these ! But although the spirit was willing, the flesh was weak. Her noble efforts to live down the sense of utter desolation which weighed upon her were impeded by her

own health, never at any time very robust and which now became most unsatisfactory.

I feel to my deep sorrow, to my humiliation, that it is not in my power to bear the canker of constant solitude. I had calculated that with the stimulus which would be derived from intellectual exertion, my mind would perforc rouse itself. It is not so; even intellect, even imagination will not dispense with the ray of domestic cheerfulness. Late in the evenings, and all through the night, I fall into a condition of mind which turns entirely to the past—to memory; and memory is both sad and relentless. You cannot help me, and must not trouble yourself in any shape to sympathise with me. It is my cup—I must drink it as others do theirs. I have just received yours of this morning. The longings for liberty and leisure which May sunshine wakens in you stir my sympathy. For my part I am free to walk on the moors, but when I go out there alone, everything reminds me of the times when others were with me, and then the moors seem a wilderness—featureless, solitary, saddening. My sister Emily had a particular love for them, and there is not a knoll of heather, not a branch of fern, not a young bilberry leaf, not a fluttering lark or linnet but reminds me of her. The distant prospects were Anne's delight, and when I look round, she is in the blue tints, the pale mists, the waves and shadows of the horizon. In the hill-country silence their poetry comes by lines and stanzas into my mind; once I loved it, now I dare not read it; and am driven often to wish I could taste one draught of oblivion and forget much that, while life remains, I shall never forget. Many people seem to recall their departed with a sort of melancholy complacency; but I think these have not watched them through lingering sickness, nor witnessed their last moments. It is these reminiscences that stand by your bedside at night and rise up by your pillow in the morning.

The story of the Brontës must necessarily be told more or less in a minor key. Yet to them it was given to experience moments of the keenest, the most thrilling and pleasurable emotions. It is gratifying to remember that both Emily and Anne knew of and shared in Charlotte's success,

besides receiving honourable recognition of their own individual talent. Such a result of their hours of quiet labour must have far more than realised their wildest anticipations, and could not fail to afford them unmitigated delight. The *incognito* which they preserved for so long doubtless gave an added zest to their knowledge of the power they wielded. Here is rather an amusing letter written some time after Branwell's death, when Emily's state of extreme delicacy was supposed to be the temporary result of the shock they had undergone, and from which they were beginning to rally.

There is no mincing the matter! What a bad set the Bells must be! What appalling books they write! To-day, as Emily appears easier, I thought the review would amuse her, so I read it aloud to her and Anne. As I sat between them at our quiet, and now somewhat melancholy fireside, I studied the two ferocious authors. Ellis, "the man of uncommon talents, but dogged, brutal, and morose," sat leaning back in his easy chair, drawing his impeded breath as best he could, and looking, alas! piteously pale and wasted. It is not his wont to laugh, but he smiled, half amused and half in scorn as he listened. Acton was sewing. No emotion ever stirs him to loquacity, so he only smiled too, dropping at the same time a single word of calm amazement to hear his character so darkly portrayed. I wonder what the reviewer would have thought of his own sagacity could he have beheld the pair as I did. Vainly, too, might he have looked round for the masculine partner in the firm of Bell & Co. How I laugh when I read the solemn assertions that *Jane Eyre* was written in partnership, and that it "bears the marks of more than one mind and one sex!" The wise critics would certainly sink a degree in their own estimation if they knew that yours was the first masculine hand that touched the MS. of *Jane Eyre*, and that, till you read it, no masculine eye had scanned a line of its contents. However, the view they take of the matter rather pleases me than otherwise. If they like, I am not unwilling they should think a dozen ladies and gentlemen aided at the compilation of the book,—strange patchwork it must seem to them! This chapter being penned by Mr., that by Miss or Mrs. Bell, that char-

acter or scene being delineated by the husband, that other by the wife! The gentlemen of course doing the rough work, the ladies getting up the finer parts. I admire the idea.

Much interest and amusement was gleaned also from the lighter part of their labours, when the MSS. were once despatched, and safely deposited in the hands of the publishers. There is more than one pretty picture of the group of three drawn by Charlotte's pen, eagerly discussing the probable verdict on this or that doubtful point, and anticipating the comments and remarks which were sure to follow. The pity is that such pleasant interludes were of so short duration.

Here, for instance, is Charlotte vigorously defending her favourite Mr. Rochester, upon whom Mr. Williams would appear to have cast some slur.

Mr. Rochester has a thoughtful nature and a very feeling heart; he is neither selfish nor self-indulgent; he is ill-educated and misguided, and errs, when he does err, through rashness and inexperience. He lives for a time as too many other men live, but being radically better than most men, he does not like that degraded life, is never happy in it. He is taught the severe lessons of experience, and has sense to learn wisdom from them. Years improve him,—the effervescence of youth foamed away, what is really good in him still remains,—his nature is like wine of a good vintage; time cannot sour, but only mellows him. Such, at least, was the character I intended to portray.

In another page we find her taking up the cudgels in defence of her creation of Mrs. Rochester.

Miss Kavanagh's views of Mrs. Rochester coincide with Leigh Hunt's. I agree with them that the character is shocking, but I know that it is but too natural. There is a phase of insanity, which may be called moral madness, in which all that is good or even human, seems to disappear from the mind, and a fiend nature replaces it. The sole aim and desire of the being thus possessed is to exasperate, to molest, to destroy; and preternatural ingenuity and energy are often exercised to that dreadful

end. The aspect in such cases assimilates with the disposition—all seems demonised. It is true that profound pity ought to be the only sentiment elicited by the view of such degradation, and equally true it is that I have not sufficiently dwelt on that feeling. I have erred in making horror too predominant. Mrs. Rochester, indeed, lived a sinful life before she was insane; but sin is itself a species of insanity. The truly good behold and compassionate it as such. *Jane Eyre* has got down into Yorkshire; a copy has even penetrated into this neighbourhood. I saw an elderly clergyman reading it the other day, and had the satisfaction of hearing him exclaim, "Why, they have got — school, and Mr. — here, I declare, and Miss —" (naming the originals of Lowood, Mr. Brocklehurst, and Miss Temple). He had known them all. He said, too, that Mr. — (Brocklehurst) "deserved the chastisement he had got." He did not recognise "Curer Bell!" What author would do without the advantage of being able to walk invisible?

Among her opinions on her own writings appears the following relating to *The Professor*, perhaps the last popular of her works.

The middle and latter portion of the work, all that relates to Brussels, the Belgian school, &c., is as good as I can write; it contains more pith, more substance, more reality, in my judgment, than much of *Jane Eyre*. It gives, I think, a new view of a grade, an occupation, and a class of characters all very commonplace, very insignificant in themselves, but not more so than the materials composing that portion of *Jane Eyre* which seems to please most generally.

With reference to *Shirley* I quote a few words in defence of the scene in which is portrayed Shirley's terror at the bite of the dog. It has been stated, by the way, but I do not remember by what authority, that her sister Emily was in reality the heroine of this adventure. Charlotte has been urged to suppress the whole incident, but clings to it notwithstanding.

Your advice is good, and yet I cannot follow it. I *cannot* alter now. It sounds absurd, but so it is. The circumstances of Shirley's being nervous on such a matter may appear "incongruous," because, I fear,

it is not well managed ; otherwise it is perfectly natural. For such minds, odd points, queer, unexpected weaknesses *are* found. Still, the thing is badly managed. I bend my head, and expect in resignation what, *here I know, I deserve*—the lash of criticism. I shall wince when it falls, but I shall not scream.

Her satirical comments on the clergy which appear in the same novel, and which brought down upon her head a perfect storm of disapproval and anger, she defends with energy, taking to herself the right of perfect freedom in speaking her mind on this, as well as on any other subject. One or two expressions in the following extract are amusing when the circumstances of her marriage are remembered.

If the spirit moves me in future to say anything about priests, &c., I shall say it with the same freedom as heretofore. I hope, also, that their anger will not make *me* angry. As a body, I had no ill-will against them to begin with, and I feel it would be an error to let opposition engender such ill-will. A few individuals may possibly be called upon to sit for their portraits some time ; if their brethren in general dislike the resemblance and abuse the artist, *tant pis !*

After her marriage the correspondence from which the above extracts are taken abruptly ceases, or at least, there is no record of its continuance in my possession.

E. BAUMER-WILLIAMS.

THE STRANGER IN THE HOUSE.

FROM my post of observation I cannot see that part of the House of Commons which is under the clock, and which, I believe, is the favourite haunt of the wilder spirits of the Irish brigade on one side, and of the "young bloods" of the Conservative party on the other. But this loss, if it be a loss, is more than made up by the commanding view which I get of a portion of the space at the back of the Speaker's chair. Some one may ask, What on earth of any interest can go on there? Much, very much; it is a sort of neutral ground where rival leaders may meet and try to arrange some compromise of a pressing difficulty, unobserved by the reporters who are just overhead, and unnoticed even by the bulk of their own supporters. No man can be said to have a thorough insight into the secret springs of action unless he knows something of what takes place during the session behind the Speaker's chair. If this statement be true, it follows that comparatively few persons in England can possibly have a right comprehension of one-half that goes on in the world of politics. And that is the plain truth of the matter. The newspapers can do little more than repeat what they are told by the chiefs of the party they represent, or draw their own inferences from the events which they record. However astute their managers may be, it is very easy for a Ministry to throw dust in their eyes, and the political leader who has not acquired the art of doing that is not worth his salary. It was Mr. Chamberlain, I think, who once suggested that there should always be a member of the Cabinet charged with the duty of "looking after" the Press. The newspapers are becoming more influential and

more important out of doors than Parliament itself—in fact, have not some of them boldly suppressed the reports of Parliamentary proceedings, or cut them down into so small a space that no one can learn anything from them? Obviously, then, it is of the utmost importance to put a hook into the nose of this Leviathan, and the modern politician, who has attained any kind of position or notoriety, may be trusted to have found out the way to accomplish that feat. Thus the newspaper, as a rule, merely tells the public what certain influential persons, who hold all the wires in their own hands, wish the public to know. That is because the "able editors" cannot see behind the Speaker's chair.

A new clause of great importance is suddenly added to a Bill, or one of equal importance is withdrawn. The wise men of Fleet Street and the surrounding parts cannot make out why it was done. The reason is that a little private bargain was made behind the Speaker's chair. That is the spot from which the strings are pulled. To all appearance Mr. W. H. Smith is the leader of the House of Commons. Is he really so? Sometimes I am inclined to doubt it. The true dictator, the autocrat who will be obeyed, is a man who is not in the Ministry at all, and who does not even sit on the ministerial side of the House. During a somewhat critical part of the discussions on the Irish Land Purchase Bill, the Government appeared to be thrown into a state of complete confusion by a signal which was made from the opposite benches. Mr. Smith roused himself from his dreams; Mr. Goschen looked anxious, nervous, worried—not that there was anything unusual in that; Mr. Balfour, who was speaking, began to stammer.

What had happened? Mr. Chamberlain had by a gesture intimated his dissent from something that had been said. Mr. Smith rose immediately and went a little to the left of the back of the Speaker's chair, where we despised strangers could survey his movements at our leisure. Another signal was passed, and presently Mr. Chamberlain joined Mr. Smith. It was very easy to see which of the two was laying down the law to the other. Mr. Chamberlain's emphatic forefinger was hard at work; Mr. Smith's look was sorrowful and deferential. Presently a whispered message was passed to Mr. Goschen, he scrambled forward to obey it, nearly falling over Mr. Ritchie on his way, and the conference went on. But the point at issue was rather too tough to be settled off-hand. They all three went out at the door which, as I have been informed, leads to Mr. Smith's room. Soon after their return the course of the Government was entirely changed. The needle went round from east to west in the twinkling of an eye. The man who possesses the reality of power had made known his wishes to the man who wears the semblance of it, and the policy of a Ministry was reversed. A very important personage is reported to have said to an applicant for office, "If you want anything, you should try to make friends with Mr. Chamberlain." It would not be in human nature if Mr. Chamberlain did not now and then stand forth in his true character and speak in his own voice. On the night when the Free Education scheme was expounded, he placidly referred to it as "*our* proposals." The Conservatives smiled mournfully upon each other. They begin to know who is their true leader. A day or two afterwards the Bill itself had to be formally presented at the table. As Sir William Hart-Dyke walked up the floor with it, a chilling and deadly silence prevailed all over the Ministerial benches. But a burst of cheering proceeded from the Radical side. A child could not have

mistaken the significance of such a scene as that. The great Conservative party of England finds itself, not for the first time in its history, being led by its chiefs into the camp of the enemy. Perhaps the most distinguished of those chiefs is accumulating materials for a supplement to the famous article in which he poured out his sarcasms and denunciations on the contrivers of the famous "surrender" of 1867.

But before Free Education was reached, a long and weary road had to be travelled. The Irish Land Purchase Bill was a terrible dead weight upon the House for weeks together. It was so altered, patched about, and reshaped, that at last even its own parents could scarcely recognize it. Mr. Balfour stood by it in a dogged sort of way, but it was taken out of his hands by first one and then another, sometimes whole clauses were added to it, and it was not possible to say what shape the "healing measure" would assume before the close of any sitting. Mr. Sexton stamped his mark heavily upon it in all directions. So did Mr. T. W. Russell. Mr. Sexton, as I see him from the upper regions, is a thin, wiry, alert looking man, always buttoned up tight in a frock coat. When he is devoting himself in earnest to his work, nothing escapes his attention. Every line of a Bill becomes as full of matter for controversy as an egg is full of meat. He has made himself intimately acquainted with the forms of the House, and a man who does that may play out his game almost without a check. It was as much as Mr. Balfour could do to follow Mr. Sexton's innumerable objections, suggestions, amendments, and criticisms. Yet he had upon the other flank a still more difficult critic to deal with in the person of Sir William Harcourt, for this antagonist was deliberately and steadily bent upon mere exasperation. Whether his shots hit or missed he cared not, so long as they irritated Mr. Balfour. And although the newspapers, true to the ideal they have

created, persistently represent Mr. Balfour as a sort of Bhudda, wrapped in an impenetrable and celestial calm, yet he is but human, and sometimes Sir William Harcourt's "slings and arrows" do undeniably kindle within him great wrath, which is very visible in spite of his efforts to conceal it by an air of icy indifference. Sir William, who watches him closely, detects these signs of wincing, and flings his missiles across the table more savagely than ever. Then Mr. Balfour is very likely to follow him into the arena, and there is an encounter which greatly delights us who are looking on, and who have been wishing for something to occur to break up the monotony of the proceedings. The combatants close, wrestle, and strike out with all the force and cunning they possess ; there is a good deal of dust and heat, and presently Mr. Sexton's sarcastic tones are again heard, and Mr. Baltour has to turn to him and endeavour to parry a totally new form of attack. The labour of getting a long and complicated measure through Committee can only be appreciated by those who have seen the operation, or better still, by those who have actually played the leading part in it. All may appear to be going on well when in a single moment the entire Bill may be placed in imminent danger of utter destruction. If concessions are granted, they may lead to irreparable mischief; if they are refused, the progress of the Bill may be altogether stopped. The Minister in charge cannot afford to have his attention distracted for a single moment. He ought not to leave the House during the entire sitting. He must listen to everybody, lest a trap may be sprung upon him unawares. He must be prepared to discuss every conceivable side and aspect of the most complex and difficult questions. Mr. Balfour passes through the ordeal well, but to suppose that though he " bears it like a man," he does not also " feel it like a man," is to endow him with something like supernatural powers, and I have not

heard that he lays any claim to them.

Throughout all this business, Sir William Harcourt had a grand field for the display of his boisterous pugnacity, and he did not fail to use it to the utmost advantage. Most of the other Liberal leaders were absent, and Historicus made up his mind to do enough for everybody. If feeble mortals were prostrate with the epidemic of the season, that was their own look-out. He had no time for such useless diversions. Sir William Harcourt, although he is not in the first bloom of youth, always seems to be overflowing with robust health. That is the great and essential condition of success in political life. Unless a man has enormous " staying " powers, he will never come to much in the House of Commons. The contest has to be carried on under severe conditions, involving much fatiguing, thankless and dreary labour, varied with scenes of sudden passion and excitement. There are late and irregular hours to be faced, and there is the absolute necessity of regular attendance in a building which never can be put into a healthy state by all the "fumigating" processes that Mr. Plunket can devise. A Member of Parliament, if he desires to make his mark, should be almost always in his place. If he goes home to dinner, he should hurry back again so soon as he has swallowed his food. Should he get an office, however humble, he must not go away to dinner at all. A register is kept of the votes of all the Ministry, and if one of them has missed two or three divisions he is taken sharply to task by the leader of the House. He cannot absent himself for a couple of hours without express permission. Should he fall ill, some indulgence may be extended to him, but he had better be careful not to require it too often. He ought to be one of the first in the House and one of the last to leave it. Years of this kind of slavery will tell upon the strongest frame. It broke down Mr.

Disraeli long before his death. Lord Palmerston and Mr. Gladstone withstood the strain ; but how many men have they seen fall by the way-side never to rise again ? Let the young man who is ambitious to enter upon a political career look to his own constitution before thinking of the country's. He may be able to advance without great intellectual gifts; plenty of men do so. But without good health, he will soon be left hopelessly behind in the race.

There is no great harm in presenting a somewhat frail appearance, or in having it said of you that you are "not very strong." Mr. Parnell has flourished well on the reputation of suffering from some mysterious malady which obliges him to make periodical disappearances from the House. His pale face and his languid manner go far to confirm the common report. But when he was wanted he was generally on the spot. For some years he seldom deserted his post. Now, as a matter of course, he is rarely seen in the House. He comes often enough to disabuse his mutinous followers of the hope that he has gone for good. Just as they are saying to themselves, "he will not come again this session," he glides in among them, remains till he has made them uncomfortable, and when they look round for him he is gone. The other night he actually introduced a Bill, a performance which naturally drew upon him the eyes of all beholders. For a Bill cannot be brought in by stealth. It has to be ushered into the world in a most ceremonious manner. First the Member must stand up in his place and "move for leave." Then he must go to the Bar of the House, and stand there till the Speaker calls upon him. Then he must walk up slowly to the table, and hand in his precious Bill to the clerk, and stand there until the title is read and a day fixed for the second reading. This is a performance which a shy man very much dislikes. Whether Mr. Parnell is a shy man or not I cannot say, but he always seems

to avoid publicity. He shuns the lobbies as much as possible, and never goes upon the terrace where ladies are invited to take tea. Mr. Parnell's peculiar reputation seems to exclude the idea of bashfulness ; but a man's reputation or associations do not always give us a true conception of his character, or even of his tastes and pursuits.

Take another example of that in the highly-respectable case of Mr. W. H. Smith. Among the things I have learnt from time to time since I have sat "among the gods" is that Mr. Smith never reads a newspaper. All things considered, that is a very curious fact. Mr. Smith's opportunities for informing himself as to the opinions of the Press cannot be inferior to those which ordinary men enjoy. He must be aware that newspapers exist. He may even have seen them at a distance. But he touches not the unclean thing. Often have I heard him interrogated as to statements that have appeared in the public journals, and always with the same result. He turns to the Speaker with an open countenance and a beaming smile, and declares that he has not opened a newspaper that day, or yesterday, or last week, as the case may be. "It may seem incredible," he will say with a child-like look, "but I have not time to read the newspapers. I have not seen the paper to which the hon. gentleman alludes." On the 5th of June it happened that he was pressed rather closely on this point. Mr. Balfour had delivered a speech on the previous evening at a public meeting, announcing that the greater part of Ireland was shortly to be withdrawn from the provisions of the Coercion Act. That, assuredly, was a statement of policy of the highest importance—such a statement as one might expect to be made first in the House of Commons, and not out of doors. Mr. Smith was asked if he had read it. He looked more surprised than ever that so frivolous a question should be put to him, and the old answer came trippingly

from the tongue. "It may seem incredible, sir, but I have not had time to open a newspaper to-day." Well, but was he not aware of what Mr. Balfour had said the night previously? Mr. Smith put both his hands upon the box, as if he were feeling for the Testament within it used for administering the oath to Members, and replied solemnly, "No, sir, I have not the least idea what my colleague has said. This morning I have not had time," and so on as before. The questioner retired discomfited. How is it possible to carry on a political controversy with a man who does not read the newspapers and has not the least idea what is going on in the world? Sometimes Mr. Smith varies his reply. "I should have thought, sir," he will say, "that the very fact of such a statement appearing in the newspapers ought to have been quite sufficient to convince the hon. gentleman that there was no truth in it." Then the House is sure to laugh. It persists in seeing something comical in Mr. Smith's contemptuous treatment of newspapers. Next to a member sitting down on his hat, or on somebody else's—which is always a great success—the favourite performance is to see the leader tramping on the newspaper. This interesting exhibition generally takes place at question time.

Questions, though often unintelligible to a mere outsider, are evidently enjoyed by the House itself, for it is while they are being put that the attendance is the largest. The inquirers are of many different kinds, the unmitigated bore predominating considerably in point of numbers. It is generally supposed that a Minister must have a great deal of trouble in dealing with this part of his business, but luckily all the work is done for him in the department to which he belongs, except on some such occasion as that to which I shall presently refer. The facts are put together by the clerks in the office, and when the number of the question is called out in the House, the Minister has nothing

more to do than to read the answer with which he has been supplied, unless supplementary questions are put upon the same subject. That, no doubt, happens very frequently, but the Minister always has it in his power to put an end to the catechism by declining to make further reply without notice. The Irish have learnt to use this instrument with unrivalled skill. They will follow up a question with such ingenuity and persistency as either to compel the Minister to give them the information they want, or to make it appear that he is actuated by a desire to shuffle with the House. They stand by each other through thick and thin, and should any remonstrance be made from another part of the House they soon shout it down. Not seldom are they responsible for at least two-thirds of the questions down on the paper for the day. One afternoon, in June, Mr. Maurice Healy had given notice of ten questions, and the next day his name stood against seven more. As he had additional questions to put, arising out of the answers, his score could not have been less than twenty-five for the two days. Sometimes it would almost seem that the whole universe had been ransacked to find subjects for these questions. Anybody may get his grievance brought before the House of Commons, for a few moments at least, if he can find a Member good-natured enough to put a question on the paper. Thus, cases which were long ago disposed of appear and reappear after intervals of years. Mr. Smith was asked one afternoon whether the Government proposed to make restitution to the Baron de Bode. How much did the Member who put this question know about the history of the Baron de Bode? That the extent of his knowledge was extremely limited is proved by the fact that he consented even to introduce the subject. The old Duke of Wellington was far better acquainted with the circumstances of the case than any Member of the present

House of Commons, and he was of opinion that the family had no valid claim upon the British Exchequer.

Yet there are times when the right to question Ministers, even though used in an objectionable way or for a malicious purpose, may be made to produce good results. It was so on the afternoon of June 15th, when some of the gentlemen who delight to stir up muddy waters resolved to "draw" the Secretary of State for War about the miserable baccarat case. Mr. Edward Stanhope is a very cool-headed man, and he generally manages to parry with great adroitness the strokes which are levelled at him or at any section of his department. On this particular day he was invited to make known what steps the War Office proposed to take against certain persons who were alleged to have acted contrary to a specific regulation of Her Majesty's army. Of course a discussion cannot be raised on a question, but an inconsiderate answer may perhaps be made the means of giving rise to an excuse for moving the adjournment of the House, and then the whole subject may be talked about for hours. But Mr. Stanhope did not lay himself open in the way that was anticipated and desired. So far from doing that, he made a frank and manly statement to which the good sense and good feeling of the House at once responded. Of the four officers implicated, the most grievous offender had been dismissed from the army. Another was on the retired list, and therefore was no longer subject to the Queen's regulations. Another had expressed his regret to his commanding officer for what had occurred. And as for the Prince of Wales—the mark specially aimed at—he had authorised Mr. Stanhope to acknowledge the error of judgment which he had committed in not requiring the original offender to submit himself immediately to be dealt with by a military tribunal. But to this Mr. Stanhope added his opinion

that if any Member of the House had suddenly heard that an intimate friend had been accused of dishonourable conduct, he would "naturally have hesitated before taking any course which would bring immediate and irretrievable ruin upon the whole future career" of that friend. And as the House received these words with cheers, which seemed to me to come from pretty nearly all parts, Mr. Stanhope very promptly and firmly added: "It is not proposed to take any further action in the matter." Now this was a very good example of a thoroughly successful answer, for there was not a sentence too much or too little, and nothing would have been easier than to commit a grievous error in either direction, and then the waters of strife would indeed have been let loose. Mr. Stanhope had to tread on the thinnest of thin ice, but he went boldly across, and came safely out on the other side. Mr. Gladstone, had he been present, would have recognised a touch of his own skill in this little exploit.

But Mr. Gladstone on that particular occasion was absent, and he was represented by Sir William Harcourt, who thought it best to appear unconscious of what was going on, and by Mr. Morley, who presently made a very good speech on another topic. Everybody was glad to see and hear Mr. Morley again, for he had been one of the numerous victims of the malady which we are pleased to call the "influenza." What Mr. Morley has to say always carries weight with it, for he is thoroughly in earnest, and he brings to his work in Parliament the great advantage of high character. But, it may be said or thought, surely every Parliamentary leader does that? Perhaps so; indeed, let us hope so, and not only hope it, but believe it. Then we shall still cherish that lofty opinion of English public life which every true Briton ought to prize as among the most precious of his "heir-looms."